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LIFE IN THE DESERT:

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OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF TRAVEL

IN

ASIA AND AFRICA.

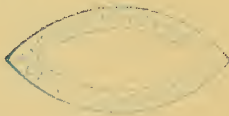
BY

COLONEL L. ^{LOUIS} DU COURET.

(HADJI-ABD'EL-HAMID-BEY.)

EX-LIEUTENANT OF THE EMIRS OF MECCA, YÉMEN AND PERSIA. DELEGATE OF THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO CENTRAL AFRICA, MEMBER OF THE SOCIÉTÉ
ORIENTALE, ACADEMIE NATIONALE, ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.



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NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE book herewith offered to the public is a translation of one published at Paris last summer, under the title of "LES MYSTERES DU DÉSERT"—a title to which exception was taken by some of the French reviewers, on the ground of its not being suggestive of the character of the work. As this objection appears to the translator to be well founded, he takes the liberty of introducing the English version by the title of "LIFE IN THE DESERT," which appears to him to be sufficiently descriptive of the general aim and revelations of the narrative. But few other deviations have been made by him from the author's intentions; and, admitting the rejection of several passages unfit for reproduction in an English dress, the compression of the first chapter, and of a somewhat loose style of paragraphical arrangement generally, the translator believes that he has rendered the work as faithfully as

the exigencies of the case allow. His aim has been to preserve the spirit, and, as far as possible, the form of the original, while presenting it in such readable English as he has at his command. The following preface is condensed from that written for the original work by M. Stanislas De Lapeyrouse.

C. D. S.

NEW YORK, 19th April, 1860.

P R E F A C E .

LOUIS DU COURET was born in the year 1812, at Huningue, or Great Hüningen, department of the Haut-Rhin. His father, a Colonel of the Empire, fell in 1813, on one of the battle fields of Spain, just as he was on the point of obtaining his brevet as a Brigadier-General. From his early years it may be said of young Du Couret that "the boy was father of the man," for narratives of travel were his greatest delight, and he used to look forward with ardor to the realization of his cherished dreams of adventure in Africa and the unexplored regions of the East.

M. Du Couret married before he had attained his twenty-fourth year—soon after which he tore himself away from the enjoyments of domestic bliss, and embarked for the East, drawn thither, as he said, by an irresistible spell that seemed to urge him toward the rising of the sun.

After a short sojourn at Constantinople, he bent his steps toward Egypt, then under the rule of the illustrious Mehemet Ali. That prince, who had an acute perception of character, received M. Du Couret with a hospitable welcome, and, soon after his arrival at Cairo, appointed him to a military command, in which capacity he performed services of great importance to the State. Subsequently his thirst for adventure led him to visit Central Africa, in the remote districts of which he made a discovery of one of the most curious facts connected with the physiology of the human race—that of the existence of the *Niam-Niams*, or men with tails, undeniable evidences regarding which abnormal race were produced by him to the satisfaction of the scientific bodies of Paris.

After much perilous adventure in Africa, our traveler returned to Egypt, where he enjoyed a brief repose from his labors. But he was ever haunted by his long cherished desire to penetrate to Mecca, in view of which object he embraced the profession of the Mohammedan faith, during a sojourn at Djedda. Soon after this he set out for

Mecca, on his arrival at which holy city he was honored with the usual distinction of *Hadji*, or "pilgrim," a title of much significance among the Arabs, and bestowed upon those only to whom it has been vouchsafed to touch the black stone of the Kâaba. Shortly afterwards, Hadji-Abd'el-Hamid, as our traveler was henceforth to be called, was raised by the Pasha to the dignity of *Bey*, or Colonel, in his service.

Leaving Mecca, after a sojourn of some time there, Abd'el-Hamid followed up his destiny in a series of wild adventures through the countries bordering upon the Persian Gulf, penetrated to Mesopotamia, and visited Bagdad. Subsequently he resided for a while in the dominions of the Imaum of Muscat, whose friendship and confidence he found of great service to him in the prosecution of ulterior views of travel.

After an absence of many years, Du Couret revisited France, where he devoted himself for some time to the extension of his notes of travel. Before he had long enjoyed the repose to which he was so well entitled, however, he again found the spell of adventure too strong for him. In the year 1849 he obtained from government the conduct of an expedition to the interior of Africa—a mission organized for purposes scientific, political, and commercial. This project, however, failed in coming to maturity, owing to many causes, which it is unnecessary to recapitulate here.

Obliged by circumstances to remain in France, Du Couret turned his attention to the literature of his travels, publishing successively his "Pilgrimage to Mecca" and his "Arabia Felix"—the former of which was edited by Alexandre Dumas, while the latter made its appearance in the *feuilleton* of the *Siècle*. These were followed by the narrative of his adventures in the mighty Desert, than which no book of travels has ever given a greater amount of instructive and curious revelations—its pictures impressing the mind by their combination of startling color and truth.

Simplicity and freedom from pretension are the main characteristics of the narratives published by M. Du Couret—narratives which none can read without gaining a great amount of curious and interesting information on the subject of that gorgeous dream-land—the East.

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LIFE IN THE DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

THE CARAVAN.

ON Wednesday, the second of August, in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and forty-four, as the sun was sinking down into the golden west, diffusing over heaven and earth the crimson glory that precedes twilight, a dark line streamed out from the suburbs of Kassr-el-Nad. It moved slowly toward the east, looming mysteriously against the glowing horizon, like a streak of vapor hunted by the wind.

That weird traveler of the sky was a caravan, composed of some two hundred and eighty souls, with three hundred and fifty camels and dromedaries for the transport of their bodies, baggage, water and provisions, from the frontier of Sana to the country of Dsjof, or Mareb, the chief city of which—also called Mareb—stands hard by the site of Saba, renowned in ancient days as Saba the White.

The land of Mareb, into which we had just entered, is bounded on the east by the Sea of Sand and the territory of Hadramaut, on the west by Yemen, on the south by the province of Jaffea, and on the north by the Great Desert of Arabia.

But one European traveler, previous to myself, had found

his way into these regions. The adventurer to whom I refer was a Frenchman, called Arnaud, but who traveled under the assumed name of Hakim-Yusuf—Doctor Joseph. In the year 1843, I fell in with this traveler at Hodeida, whither he had just arrived from Mareb, in a state of utter destitution and with a story of unheard-of suffering. Yet, such was the passion for adventure with which I was possessed, that, in spite of his experience, I resolved to encounter the dangers and difficulties foreshadowed by him.

I had set my mind upon penetrating to Doân, Schibam and Terim, those mysterious cities of which the Arabs talked to me with vague surmise. They told me of the Bahr-el-Houd—a lake of immeasurable depth, swarming with fish of great size. The way marked out for me across the desert led close by the famous Sea of Sand. If fortunate enough to escape from the surging billows of that treacherous land-sea, I might yet reach Mokallah, upon the Indian Ocean, after a journey which no European had ever before accomplished.

The caravan with which I traveled was to carry me from Kassr-el-Nad to Mareb in four days. It had taken us four already to reach the former from Sana, which is only thirty leagues from the latter; but the road is so rough, and so much encumbered with sand-heaps, into which camels sink to their bellies, that they can hardly make more than three or four leagues at a stretch.

My followers consisted of two men servants and a female negro slave—the latter a gift bestowed upon me at Abu-Arisch. Their names respectively were Selim, Mohammed, and Saïda.

We had three dromedaries to carry us, and two for the transport of our baggage. The one upon which I was mounted was an animal of noble pedigree, a gift from the Imaum of Sana, capable, in extreme cases, of performing five leagues within an hour.

“Gold and silk,” says Buffon, “are not the true wealth

of the east; the dromedary is the best treasure of the Asiatic."

The people to whom this animal is so indispensable call him, in their figurative language, the *ship of the desert*. Nature, in fact, seems purposely to have allotted him to these barren and sandy wastes, which extend from Barbary to China, with a breadth of some fourteen or fifteen hundred leagues.

Dromedaries, which bear the same relation to the camel proper as the thorough-bred does to the draught horse, are divided into classes.

Those most esteemed among the Arabs come from Muscat. Some of these I have known to fetch as much as three thousand francs each. They are of a reddish color, and their speed is combined with strength.

Next in value are those from Soudan, which are nearly white, of small size, but fine as thorough-bred greyhounds. These dromedaries are wonderfully fleet, but they cannot carry heavy burdens.

The dromedaries of Hedjaz, of Nedjêd, and of Yémen, although of good blood, have not the reputation of those mentioned above. Their value ranges from two hundred to three hundred francs. They can seldom travel more than ten leagues in a days' march; that is to say, from sunrise to sunset, deducting the three hours of mid-day, which the traveler usually devotes to refreshment and repose. Those of Muscat and of Soudan, on the contrary, can make their forty or fifty leagues within the same time.

The dromedary in general, the *dromas camelos* of the Greeks, the *camelus Arabiae* of Pliny, is called *hedjin*, or *djemaz*, by the Arabs. Its hair, which is soft and woolly, grows more thickly upon the hump, the throat and the limbs, than on other parts of the animal. In general appearance it resembles the ordinary camel, than which it is slighter, however, and of more elegant form; its legs and whole frame being so slender, indeed, that on first seeing

it we are tempted to doubt whether it can be one of those high-bred animals of whose feats we have heard so much. Its best pace is a well-sustained trot, of unvarying speed throughout the whole journey. The walk and gallop of the animal are most distressing to the rider—particularly the walk.

On a long journey, when food is scarce, the brambles and bushes of worm-wood that grow by the wayside afford a scanty repast to the dromedary, who nibbles at them without slackening his pace. Should this resource fail him, he makes the most of circumstances, and trots cheerfully on to the end of his journey. He can endure hunger for three days—thirst for eight or nine.

In Hedjaz and Yémen they feed their dromedaries on beans and herbage; in Assir, on the stones of dates; in Theama, on *dourah*, or millet, and on the tender shoots of the *acacia mimosa*, cut into little sticks and roasted over the fire.

The dromedaries are tethered, like horses, before the dwellings of their masters, who generally make them kneel down when they want to mount them. An active camel-rider, however, springs at the pommel of the saddle, plants one foot against the knee of the animal, and the other on its curving neck, and gains his seat without making it kneel.

The saddle, which extends from the shoulder to the haunches, is fastened with two girths. It consists simply of three pieces of wood, put together so as to fit the hump, the end pieces projecting about a foot above the seat. These saddles are generally very hard, the rider's share of them being nothing but a frame of wood, covered with leather. Nature has singularly adapted to these uncomfortable seats that portion of the anatomy of an Arab that comes in contact with them; but the European who ventures on them is sure to suffer. Fortunately for myself I had long been a hardened Arab; yet, as it was a far stretch to

Mokallah, I had insured myself from injury on this occasion by placing on the saddle a couple of splendid Abyssinian sheep-skins, a gift from Cherif Hussein, of Abu-Arisch.

The dromedary's share of the saddle is carefully padded with straw, the center of it being accurately fitted to the animal's hump, on which the hair is allowed to grow, the better to guard against friction.

The rider sits on his dromedary somewhat as a woman does on horseback. A simple halter is generally sufficient for the guidance of the animal, unless he happens to be of an intractable disposition, in which case a rein attached to a metal ring inserted in the nostrils is used. For urging on the animal they use a cane with a spike at the end of it, with which they prick him behind the ears. Sometimes a *courbash*, or whip of hippopotamus hide, is used for this purpose, but it should be applied sparingly.

Generally speaking, the dromedary accommodates his pace to suit the will of his rider, putting great energy into his action when hard pressed. If over-driven, however, he either drops, exhausted, or lies sulkily down and tries to bite his tormenter.

The dromedaries of the caravans are profusely covered with amulets, placed there by the superstitious Arabs to preserve them from the effects of the *evil eye*. These amulets are usually of grotesque form, so as to attract the eye of the malevolent spirit, which is supposed to expend its blighting influence upon them, instead of upon the animal or its master. They are made either of the skins of noxious animals, or of some article plundered from a European, whose infidel property is supposed to possess powerful attractions for every thing malignant and malevolent. The tail of a fox, the paws of a jackal, the teeth of the lion or of the hyena—all these are used as amulets; but nothing is supposed to be more effective than the little shoes of a child whose parents do not happen to be of the mussulman persuasion.

Infants are generally protected by *tamymah*, or talismans, which are scraps of paper inscribed with some holy words, such as passages from the Koran, and sewed up in little bags. These are fastened upon the head, from which they are not removed until the age of infancy is past.

But, to return to our caravan—it was composed, as we have said, of about two hundred and eighty persons. Of these nearly one hundred and fifty were slaves, male and female—negroes, who were treated with great cruelty, and Abyssinians, who were better cared for, the former being compelled to travel on foot as much as possible, while the latter were carried in covered machines called *haouïas*, which are something like the panniers in which donkeys carry provisions to market.

Our baggage camels were three hundred in number, fifty of them laden with water and provisions. The water is contained in leathern bottles; those used upon long journeys in the desert, however, being different from the ones commonly in use. The ordinary water-bottle, or *zem-zemïe*, made of a single goat skin, is attached to the pommel of the saddle by a hook, so that the rider can unhook it and drink at pleasure without slackening his pace; but the one used in the desert, the *ghirbé*, is constructed of the entire skin of a young camel, and is capable of containing from fifty to sixty gallons of water. Each camel carries two of these.

The other provisions—to preserve them from the omnivorous ants—are packed up in great wallets of camel's hair, called *khourdj*. Inside these wallets are smaller ones, called *messued*, which contain flour, dried dates, rice, a pot for making pillau, a small bag of coffee, a coffee-pot, butter and honey—constituting in all the regular rations of an Arab properly so-called—a Bedouin of the desert. As for luxuries, they deny themselves nothing—not even the traditional divan.

Butter and honey, of course, soon melt in the hot tem-

perature of the desert, where at noon the thermometer ranges, in partial shade, from 35° to 40° —in the sun from 50° to 55° ,* and where an egg can be cooked by putting it in the sand.

On this journey the Arabs, who commonly go bare-footed, adopted the sandal, or rather a mere sole of leather fastened beneath the foot. Each man was armed with a matchlock, richly ornamented with silver, coral, and mother-of-pearl: for in his gun and his *sommada*, his lance and his *djembi*, is displayed the foppery of the Arab of the desert.

The *sommada* is a handkerchief of gaudy colors, which he winds around his head. For the wealthy it is of silk, fringed, and embroidered with gold or silver thread. Those worn by the poorer classes are of cheap cotton.

The *djembie* is a curved poniard, carried in the girdle, which, except among the aristocracy of the tribes, is simply a strap of leather, passed three or four times around the waist, and adorned with amulets and shells.

The Arabs of these countries, from their habit of greasing their bodies, have remarkably smooth, soft skin. Their long, black hair falls in tresses upon their shoulders—often down to the girdle. Some of them plat their hair, attaching small pellets of lead to the ends of it, to extend it to its full length. Their features are sharp and expressive—their complexions, in general, swarthy, set off by magnificent eyes and teeth.

Courage, among the Arabs, is never alluded to as a qualification, for they all possess it. Not, as among us, do their parents teach them in their infancy: "Keep out of harm's way." Their maxim, on the contrary, is: "Confront danger if you would escape it. Give battle to the wild beast and slay him, if you don't want him to eat you." With them courage is a matter of course, and not a mere speciality.

* Réaumur's thermometer. About 110° to 120° , and 140° to 160° Fahrenheit.

When on the march they cover the body only with a *fouta*, or piece of stuff of a blue or white color, with red or yellow stripes—for bright colors are fashionable in the desert. From the waist up and the knee down they are quite naked. Hair grows thickly on such parts of their bodies and limbs as are exposed to the air.

The Arab sleeps upon his *abbaye*, a kind of loose mantle of camel's hair, without sleeves; white, blue, or red, according to the taste of the wearer—red, however, being the prevailing color. His only precaution in the way of night-gear is, to cover the head from the chilly dews and the injurious influence of the moon. Rolled up in his *abbaye* he sleeps lightly on the sand, waking up at the slightest noise. The Arab of the Mareb country never lies face downward, considering it as an insult to the firmament to turn one's back upon it.

At night, when not a star is twinkling in the sky, the Arab will tell you the time by the temperature of the sand, and the locality by the taste of it; while, by the increasing verdure of the herbage, he can foretell the proximity of water.

During his journeys he smokes or chews incessantly; smoking tobacco mixed with the leaves and stems of hemp, and chewing betel, which he calls *kaad*; a plant which grows abundantly all through Arabia, especially in Yémen, and which possesses the intoxicating quality of hemp.

Attached to one of the strings of his *sommada* there is always to be seen a little stick of *mossouack*, or walnut wood, which he dips in a small box of horn, bone, or ivory, containing powdered tobacco mixed with cloves and nutmegs, and applies to his teeth. This powder, used by men and women alike, and called by them *Bordugal* (Portugal), is very salivating in its effects. Among the Arabs of the towns, spitting is looked upon as very vulgar, but those of the Mareb are much given to that habit, a remark which applies even to the women; as we get away from the desert, however, we observe that the habit disappears.

Every Arab here wears a finger-ring, which he uses as a seal, or *khralem*, and by way of signature; for it is but seldom that those of the lower ranks know how to write. Some, like the knights of old, have a seal on the pummels of their swords, and their cipher engraved on the hilts of their daggers.

The women envelop themselves simply in a piece of cloth, which, however, covers nearly the entire person. In their domestic arrangements their drapery is very scanty indeed.

Having said so much about the *personnel* of our caravan, let me give some account of its organization.

CHAPTER II.

THE CARAVAN—CONTINUED.

A CARAVAN travels under the guidance of a functionary called a *réis*, who undertakes the responsibility of every thing connected with it during the journey.

The name of our *réis* was Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, which, being interpreted, means *The Father of the Virgin of Doân*.

He was a native of Doân, and had contracted with the Imaum of Sana to conduct me in safety to that town, promising me personally to continue his protection after we should have parted from one another, by means of the *anyas*, or *teskeret*, addressed to other *réis* of his acquaintance. For this service it was fully understood that I was to give him a reasonable compensation, it being one of those favors which people cannot expect to get without paying for.

The *anyas*, or *teskeret*, is a kind of passport and safe conduct, which insures the stranger, traveling under its pro-

tection in Arabia, from any sudden violence, even from the vengeance of his enemies, and from any penalty incurred by him for his previous acts. To avoid abuse of it, however, the Arabs are careful to restrict it to their friends only. It is accorded once only to fugitives, becomes worthless when transferred, and the illegal appropriation of it is punishable by death. For the further prevention of fraud, the person who grants it gives, as a voucher, some object well known as belonging to him—his sword, for instance, his gun, or his *djembe*. Sometimes he sends one of his servants; and, should the occasion demand, he will not hesitate to honor his *protégé* with his personal escort. The *teskeret* is more or less extensive in its authority, according to the position of the person by whom it is granted. Coming from an obscure Arab, it has to be renewed from station to station; but where granted by a person of influence, such as a *taleb*, or a caravan conductor of renown, its authority appears to be unlimited.

The *réis* is as arbitrary with his caravan as the captain of a ship with his crew, even to the power of life and death. To arrive at his position he must, in the first place, be a man of undisputed integrity, besides which he must possess a reputation for intelligence, firmness, and address. He must be able to steer at night by the stars, or, in their absence, by the smell of the herbage and the feel of the sand; must know, by his experience of former voyages, every road, and well, and place convenient for encamping; the dangers of this or that pass, and the best ways of avoiding them. Further, he should be acquainted with all the chiefs through whose territories the caravan is to pass, and it is indispensable that he should be versed in the sanitary practice of the country with regard to the remedies for sickness, for fractures, for the venom of serpents and the sting of scorpions.

Our *réis* possessed all these qualifications.

Under his command there were two *naïbs*, or lieuten-

ants, fifteen *chouasses* (police), several *chouafs*, or scouts, and a *khrodja*, or secretary, whose business it was to draw up documents, and, in case of the death of any of the travelers, to take charge of his will and effects. There were also a *dellal*, or appraiser, who issued notices and managed sales; a *muezzin*, to call the people to prayer, and an *iman*, to attend to their spiritual wants.

The responsibility of a *réis*, personal as well as pecuniary, is very considerable. He is bound, under penalty, to insure the safety of the travelers in his caravan and their goods against all accidents. It is he who pays the *dia*, or blood-money, of any traveler who meets his death in the desert through defective arrangements on his part; and he is also answerable in case of failure of water, as well as for losses arising from the attacks of marauders. Nevertheless, retreat being impossible when once the caravan has got into the desert, travelers are careful to raise no murmurs of dissatisfaction there with any arrangements of the *réis*, complaints against whom, if any, are prudently postponed until their arrival at some abode of justice.

The amount in money for which a *réis* is responsible is sometimes very heavy; for the load of a single camel, even when consisting only of ordinary merchandise, may be valued at an average of 3,000 francs.

A camel's load is fastened upon the saddle, where it is kept secure by means of a breast-band and crupper. In ascending very steep places, the camel keeps his pack in a horizontal position by planting his hind legs firmly and moving forward on his knees, in which painful posture he will travel for a long distance without showing any signs of distress.

In addition to our baggage camels, and those which carried the provisions, we had two with us laden with European specie, such as English sovereigns, Spanish dollars, and Austrian rix-thalers. When European coin once finds its way into Arabia, it never finds it out again, for, immediately on its arrival there, a hole is punched through each

piece, in which fashion it circulates through the country; or else it is sold in the interior as merchandise, and melted down to be converted into trinkets.

The value of our caravan, then, might be set down at about twelve hundred thousand francs, a tenth of which, perhaps, belonged to Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni and his family.

On coming to Sana he brought with him merchandise of Hadramaut and Mareb, such as *abbayes*, butter, cassia, grain, blankets, incense, cloth of camels' hair for tents, gum, wool, myrrh, eggs and feathers of the ostrich, skins, carpets, etc.

Returning from Sana for home, he took with him steel, gold and silver money, arms of English manufacture, padlocks for fetters, coffee, nails, sheet-copper, cloth, spices, slaves, iron, silk handkerchiefs, brass wire, gold and silver thread, dried fruits, India stuffs, looking-glasses, muslins, Egyptian paper, gunpowder, porcelain, rice, *tombac*, or tobacco for the *narghileh*, velvets and other goods.

On each of these trips he would probably realize an acknowledged profit of one hundred per cent. I say *acknowledged*, because the Arab is slow to admit the precise amount either lost or gained by him—a matter in which it must be allowed that our European traders also are veritable Arabs. Four times a year Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni made this journey, always reaping the greatest gain from the last trip of the season, which took place just at the time of the return to Sana and its neighborhood of the pilgrims from Mount Arafat and Medina.

In my above estimate of our caravan, I did not include the slaves, who make a separate item. They numbered one hundred female negroes and fifty males, and their aggregate value amounted probably to thirty thousand francs.

The cost of transport of the caravan may be set down at three francs per day for each camel, which includes the maintenance of man and beast.

Our réis was a man of strict fidelity in all his engage-

ments, a matter which I can vouch for on my own experience. His engagement, with regard to myself, was simply to carry me safely through ; but I must say that to his protection he added much consideration and kindness. From the day of our first halt, I remarked that he caused my tent to be pitched alongside of his, in the group arranged by him from select members of the company.

Two other groups, from the second class of the caravan, were made up by the two *naïbs* ; while the *khrodja*, the *muezzin*, the *iman* and the *dellal* took the arrangement of the inferior groups. The other followers of the company, the *chouafs*, the *chaousses*, and the *djemels*, sentineled the encampment from the neighboring heights, guarded the merchandise and slaves, and looked after the animals.

It took us ten days in all to get over the thirty leagues between Sana and Mareb, a pace which will appear rather slow to a European, accustomed to fast traveling by coach and railway, but which can seldom be exceeded in this country, broken up as it is by mountains, sand-hills, and quagmires. Besides this we had to spare our animals, lest any of them might break a limb, or be forced, by some other accident, to remain behind ; the importance of which precaution can not be overrated, for a traveler deprived of his camel in the wild desert is like the sailor whose ship has foundered far out at sea.

We passed through many valleys, which were fertile or otherwise, according to the supply of water in the streams. In these we found several *douars* inhabited by Arabs, some of whom were shepherds, others warriors. The latter wore the Caucasian helmet of iron, with ear-pieces of mail and spiked top, their bodies also being protected by coats of mail. This costume is exactly that of the ancient Parthians.

One hundred of these Arabs had fought in Egypt under Mourad-Bey, who, at the time of his retreat from Thebes, before Bonaparte—the *devil-general*, as he called him—organized a corps of auxiliaries from those tribes.

“Armed to the teeth,” say the authors of the “History, Scientific and Military, of the French Expedition in Egypt,” speaking of these Arabs, “they carry each three javelins, a pike, a poniard, two pistols and a carabine, which they use by turns in their combats.”

At the affair of Samalhoud these auxiliaries ambuscaded in a dry water-course, from which they gave great trouble to the Belliard brigade, until Desaix sent Rapp and Savary against them, who drove them out. Rapp came near losing his life on this occasion, receiving a pike wound before he was saved by a hussar.

It is among these Arabs that the true poets of Arabia are to be found.

Two of these poets were with our caravan. At every halting-place they used to improvise; and sometimes, even on the route, they would chant songs of love or of war, funeral elegies, and odes that no type could fix, no pen trace. For the words are lost as soon as uttered, though memory retains a certain glimpse of them, as the lake is ruffled by the dip of the passing swallow's wing.

Our road wound through the grand chain of mountains by which the whole of Southern Arabia, from Suez to Aden, is flanked.

Well, having got so far on our journey, let us push on, for we can not but see and learn something worth talking about in a country so little explored.

CHAPTER III.

THE CARAVAN—CONTINUED.

OUR course is ever the same: now over sand-hills, now through valleys, the latter narrowing as we go, until they contract into mere gorges or defiles of the lofty mountains through which they pass.

These grand mountains, which, as we have said, flank the whole of Southern Arabia, look like giant citadels reared to repel invasion. Their summits appear to touch the blue canopy of heaven; and so steep are they that one might well liken them to fortresses built by the *genii* of the place to prevent the approach of man.

Some of them dazzle the eye with a tint of vivid red, blazing like the reflection of some great fire. Others present contrasts which art could hardly imitate without incurring the taunt of infidelity to nature.

Here we see rocks calcined by the sun into a brilliant white like that of lime; yonder they are yellow, as though waving with the golden harvest of the corn-field. There are effects of light in this panorama which no painter could render, and of which, in our lands, we catch but now and then a fleeting glimpse, when, at some glorious sunset, nature seems to bid a momentary defiance to the contemplations of painter and poet alike.

The tints of these mountain slopes are varied, in a manner pleasing to the eye, by the verdure of the herbs and shrubs which grow upon them, like garlands thrown there by chance. Sheep and goats are seen browsing upon this herbage, with men watching them—objects that give life to these immense landscapes, spread out beneath skies far brighter than those of Europe. Perched upon the steep declivities and the edges of the precipices, these animals appear as if

balanced there by enchantment, while the shepherds who watch over them look like figures poised upon the highest rocks and pinnacles to give effect to the picture.

These shepherds, unlike the pastoral swains of Virgil, have neither flutes, nor reed-pipes, nor crooks. The trusty matchlock, slung across the shoulders in its leathern case, supplies the place of these.

As these figures stand out in bold relief against the sky, they look less like shepherds than vedettes, ready, like the *regabs*, or runners of the desert, to warn their people of the approach of the caravan, or, perhaps, to swarm down and attack it.

Every caravan that crosses the desert detects in the midst of it, at some time or another, and sometimes often in the course of one journey, one or more of these *regabs*, who have mixed themselves up with the company in some mysterious manner. Slipping from behind some rock or sand-hill, or gliding from a mountain hollow or gorge of the valley, they steal in among the traders, *djemêls*, or slaves, entering into conversation with any body who will talk with them. Perhaps the person whom they address supposes them to be of the company; and thus, by a course of questions ingeniously put, they possess themselves of all such information as it is their object to acquire. If they perceive that they are objects of suspicion or mistrust, or closely watched, they take themselves adroitly away, disappearing before one has time to think about them.

Once, on our course from Sana to Kassr-el-Nad, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni detected one of these *regabs*, whom he at once remarked as not belonging to the caravan. I undertook to question this man; but as I advanced toward him, happening to turn my eyes for an instant from the point where he stood, when I again looked he was no longer there—gone, as by evaporation, or as if the earth had opened and swallowed him where he stood.

After all, these fellows run no great danger. If they

happen to be caught, they have a story ready to recommend them to the good-will of the travelers; and there is always some *sheik* or other influential person at the first douar, village or town, where the caravan halts, who is ready to become their security and set them at liberty.

Some of these intruders, however, are not what are called *regabs*, or runners of the desert, but spies from some den of robbers, who come to ascertain the strength of the caravan. Short work is generally made of such fellows when caught, which seldom happens, however.

We made our halts from eight in the morning to six or seven in the evening; for, on account of the great heat by day, we marched the whole night through, except for an hour, if possible, from half-past twelve o'clock to half-past one. The nights of the Mareb country are as lightsome as twilight with us, gleaming with a kind of half-light, through which the Arabs can discern objects at a great distance. When suspicious of ambuscades at night, these people can hear the sound of footsteps at the distance of a league, by putting their ears to the ground, distinguishing the tread of the camel from that of the horse.

Caravans are generally preceded by a donkey, in the capacity of guide, a duty which we must admit that, whether from instinct or education, he discharges to the general satisfaction of all concerned. The animal wanders at liberty, followed by the camels in file, attached to each other, in strings of ten, by palm-leaf ropes. Their legs oscillate with the regularity of a pendulum, so that if one could invent an instrument to keep reckoning of the number of oscillations, watches might be dispensed with in the desert.

In case of necessity our friend Aliboron, the ass, performs the office of scout, mounted by an Arab, who runs with him to the right and the left.

But our proper scouts, or *chouafs*, twenty in number, were Arabs of the Béni-Schiddad, a powerful tribe encamped beyond Mareb, and always at war with the Béni-

Nauf, another tribe, occupying the borders of the Sea of Sand.

These two tribes, at need, could bring into the field ten thousand warriors each. Their horses and dromedaries are of great renown; and the traverse from Sana to Doân is seldom made by them without a skirmish taking place, in which they mutually carry off the daughters of the opposing tribes, who become the wives of their captors.

The chouafs always traveled half a league ahead of us at night, in groups of two or three, and in different directions. At daybreak they used to fall back, encamping on the neighboring heights as sentinels to the caravan, which resumed its course at sunset.

Then the Arabs were all alive; some fastening up with care the skin water-bottles; others re-arranging the displaced packs, gathering up the cords which trailed upon the ground, and attaching them in coils to the saddles, which they shifted backward or forward, according to the nature of the ground to be traversed. Here one ties to the neck of his dromedary the bag into which he puts the hair shed by the animal on the route, which he takes home to his wives, who weave it into stuffs for tents and garments. Another may be seen rolling up the abbaye in which he wraps himself during the halt.

But these movements soon ceased. The réis, the naïbs, and the chaousses, who were going to and fro to see that all was right, now took the lead; the khrodja, the dellal, the iman, and the muezzin following them, each man either walking alongside of his dromedary or mounting it.

Then the djemels struck up a strange kind of rattling measure or song, like that of our Morvan mountaineers, and the caravan moved on like a ship, the animals taking to the road quickly or slowly, according to the time given by the chant. When a caravan wants to make forced marches the djemels never cease for a moment to chant this measure. In such cases there are two bands of them, who re-

lieve each other in turn, so that there may be no cessation of the music.

In my early wanderings in Arabia this kind of *staccato* psalmody had no melody whatever for my ear, producing disagreeable sensations instead; but I subsequently became so accustomed to it as to listen to it even with pleasure.

The first night of our march in the Mareb country—the fifth from our leaving Sana—passed away without any adventure.

We met one or two caravans bound for the latter town, their coming being announced to us, while yet far distant, by the tinkling of their bells. In passing, the Arabs exchanged a few words of greeting. The camels, too, expressed, by a kind of cheerful bellowing, their satisfaction at meeting some of their old companions.

A very general question on these occasions is with regard to the safety of the route; the reply to which is sometimes deceptive; for, where a caravan of three hundred camels would be perfectly safe, one of fifty might be just the reverse.

The bells of the camels give notice to the *sarecks*, or robbers, of the approach of a caravan; protecting the animals, however, against the attacks of wild beasts. These *sarecks* are thieves, but not often assassins.

Among the wild beasts of this desert the most notable is the panther, and a small, but very formidable species of lion, without a mane. Of the hyenas and jackals it is not worth while to speak, these animals being cowardly run-aways here, as every where else. But these lions are the scourge of the country, waging a perpetual war against the flocks and herds.

If the brutes contented themselves with carrying off a sheep or a young camel now and then, one might forgive them, but they often throttle ten or a dozen animals when they want but one.

One mode practiced by the Marebeys for the chase of

these lions is to train up young panthers to attack them, as we train our hounds to hunt the wolf and the wild boar. Having discovered the lair of the lion, some bold hunter sets out for it, taking with him two of these panthers, which he couples together, with their eyes bandaged, and sets upon the shoulders of his dromedary.

On the approach of the hunter the lion, always ready for a fight, rushes out of his retreat, crouching like a sphynx as the panthers are uncoupled. The moment these animals are unhooded and see the lion, they spring to the ground and separate, one facing the enemy, the other turning his flank, and then begins a fearful combat. The roars of the three animals, and the tremendous bounds made by them in the turmoil of dust, to avoid the teeth and claws of the enemy, or to transfix him with their own, can hardly be imagined by those who have not witnessed such struggles. The panther which faces the lion seldom escapes with his life; but the other springs upon the nape of the lion's neck and breaks his vertebræ.

In most cases the lion and one panther must die; but sometimes the lioness comes to the assistance of the lion, or he to her's, in which case both hunters and panthers have work enough before them. Lance and matchlock then come into play, and the Marebeys perform prodigies of valor. Abbayes are tucked up on every side, amid a storm of shouts and imprecations, while, as the Arabs express it, *the powder speaks*; the roars of the lion and lioness, the whistling of bullets, and the yells of the panthers, which fight, tooth and claw, as long as they are able, combining to form a spectacle than which few are more striking.

Yet, in the midst of all this tumult, accidents but seldom happen, unless the hunter, who is always mounted either upon horse or dromedary, happens to get thrown off among the wild beasts, or, what is more likely, to receive the bullets of a comrade.

There are other methods of hunting this lion, by which

he is destroyed with more expedition and certainty than by the one just described.

The Marebeys know that this beast, for a day or two after he has made an onslaught on their cattle, falls into a state of lethargy like that of the gorged boa constrictor, and lies helpless in his lair; a condition in which they suspect him to be when the night is unusually tranquil in a neighborhood generally disturbed by his roarings. He is then easily dispatched by the bullet of some skillful hunter, who tracks him to the thicket where he lies.

Another mode of destroying him is by digging in his path a deep pitfall, slightly covered and concealed.

Some hunters practice yet another. Fastening near the lion's haunts a live animal, as a lure, they dig a deep trench hard by, in which a hunter ensconces himself, covered over with a roof of heavy planks pierced with loopholes, from which he shoots the brute as it approaches, attracted, like an ogre, by the smell of the bait. But it is a bad business for the marksman should he only wound the lion, which then throws itself upon his ambuscade, tearing up earth and planks, no matter how strongly put together, and devouring the hapless hunter amid the ruins of his castle.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HALT AT THE RESORT OF VIPERS.

THE other animals common in this country are: the ostrich, the bustard, the Guinea fowl, the ape, the gazelle, the antelope, the ruffed moufflon, the humped ox, the wild boar, the squirrel, the hare, the rat, the porcupine, the jerboa, and the hedgehog.

The onager, or wild ass, is occasionally met with ; rarely, however, and in small troops.

Reptiles are exceedingly numerous. Of these, among the chelonians, the saurians, and the batrachians, are to be found the land tortoise, the common lizard, the winged lizard, the chameleon, the *chirchman*, the *ouaran*, the toad, the frog, and the salamander.

The *chirchman* is a small lizard with only two feet, and of a silvery white color. It is much sought after by the Arabs, among certain tribes of whom it is a principal article of food, and by whom it is called the *fish of the desert*.

The *ouaran*, which is the land crocodile of Herodotus, varies in length from eighteen or twenty inches to two or three feet. According to the Arabs, the bite of this lizard causes sterility. They roast and eat it, however, with the exception of the head and tail, as an antidote to the venom of serpents, the sting of scorpions, and poisons in general. It devours serpents and other reptiles, and, like the adder, sucks the goats whenever it can get near them. Its skin is converted into handsome purses and tobacco pouches, and its fat preserved, being supposed, like its flesh, to possess sundry marvelous properties.

Of the ophidians, I will enumerate as the most remarkable, the common adder ; the horse-shoe adder (*coluber hippocrepis*) ; the small viper ; the cerastes ; the asp ; the *hannesch* ;—a short, thick serpent, common all over Arabia—and another snake, which like the cerastes, is long and slender.

The last-mentioned serpent, although generally sluggish in its movements, darts away with such velocity, when pursued, that it is almost impossible to capture it, on which account it is named by the Arabs *khrefit-kema-nechab*, which means *swift as an arrow*. Down the middle of its belly there runs a yellow line, which terminates within three inches of the tail. On either side of this runs a gray line, and then two yellow ones narrower than the others, next to

which are two white ones, narrower still. The back is tinged with a lilac hue, separated from the white lines by a lateral black band running down each side, and freckled over with minute black dots, faintly marked on the lower part of the body, but more perceptible toward the head. The scales, from within three inches of the tail downwards, assume a hexagonal form.

The asp is of a black color, speckled with scarcely perceptible white dots, but its hue appears to be modified by a yellowish matter apparent beneath the skin. Its head is blunt, and its body, like that of the *hannesch*, nearly of the same thickness throughout. The bite of this snake, which makes its abode generally among rubbish and ruins, is extremely venomous.

For the bite of all these serpents—adders excepted—the Arabs know of no certain remedy except to suck the part bitten, or to cut or burn it out, first putting a ligature above the wound. Some of them, however, practice a singular treatment of such cases. Enclosing three teeth of a serpent in a little pill of pounded herbs, and three points of pins in another, they swallow both. Then, having soaked some camel's hair in the juice of the herbs, they tie it round the knee, leaving it there for three days, at the expiration of which time, to complete the cure, they quench a red-hot coal, by licking it with the tongue.

The tarantula and the scorpion, which are of great size, and to be found along every wall and under every stone, are nearly as venomous as the serpents above described—that is, those of the black variety, called by the Arabs respectively the *tenderaman* and the *agrab*.

I have seen specimens of these vermin from five to six inches long, but have always remarked that the smaller kinds are the most poisonous.

It is a singular fact that the Arab who receives a mortal wound in battle meets death with a smile on his face,

while he who is stung by a scorpion or serpent dies in an agony of despair.

Against all these reptiles and insects, particularly scorpions, the Arabs wage a remorseless war. No Arab ever lies down without first carefully examining the place selected by him; and yet, in spite of all this precaution, accidents very frequently occur. To entice tarantulas and scorpions out of their lurking places, the Arabs light fires and wave torches, killing the reptiles as they approach the light.

The most common insects in these regions, of the class coleoptera, are the goliaths, the cicindelas and the carabs.

Of the orthoptera and neuroptera—the wandering locust; the dragon-fly; the ephemera; and the ant-eater.

Of the hymenoptera and hemiptera—the mosquito; the bee; the hornet; the ant—black, white, and silvery; the bug; the cicada, and several others.

And among the parasites, the most abundant is the common louse, which the Arabs assert ultimately becomes a scorpion. Be this as it may, they are remarkable for their size and variety, as well as for the vivacity of their attack.

The air is peopled with pigeons, turtle-doves, ravens, eagles, and vultures.

These vultures have white bodies and black wings, on which they sail and circle continually under the blue sky, in large flocks. The Arabs do not molest them, on which account they become tolerably familiar, following the caravans in expectation of the fall of some camel by the wayside. The route through the desert is marked out by the skeletons of animals that have been stripped by them.

Although sand is the general feature of all this country, yet wherever a rivulet of water shows itself, some degree of cultivation is to be found. The douars are generally established near some small stream or well, from which is derived the little verdure to be found around them, the crops consisting of wheat, *dourah*, or millet, barley and

beans, which, although not very luxuriant in growth, are sufficient for the wants of the Arabs.

They have but few palm trees; bananas are more common. Dates—a fruit so indispensable to the inhabitants of the desert—come to them from Yémen, from Hadramaut, and from Oman.

The real wealth of this country consists in its live stock, for the wool and hair supplied by which the Arabs find a market at Sana. There is no part of the desert so arid that it does not afford some scanty vegetation, nurtured by the dew. On this herbage the animals browse, and it is sufficient for them; for, like their masters, they are abstemious, accommodating themselves readily to circumstances. In Hadramaut and the Muscat country I have seen the horses and cattle eating fish, and even meat, like carnivorous beasts. The Arabs assert that this food agrees with them better than barley, giving them double strength.

On Friday, the fourth of August, we made our second halt, reckoning from Kassr-el-Nad, near a douar on the banks of a small stream, which runs, like all the other streams of this region, into the Dona, a tributary of the Schab, one of the four great rivers of Arabia, which with us would be considered little better than a brook. This small stream, by which we halted, ran winding among thickets of rose-laurels until lost to the view. We arrived at it about eight in the morning—our regular time for halting—and intended remaining there for the rest of the day.

By and by the people of the neighboring douar came to visit us, bringing with them the *dief*, or tribute of hospitality—the bread and salt, which is generally offered by the wives and daughters of the tribe.

All these good people, on coming near where we were encamped, appeared terror-struck at the locality our scouts had selected, and, upon our inquiring the cause of their alarm, they told us that we were encamping upon the

Matrâh-el-Lefâa, or Resort of Vipers—an announcement which immediately produced the greatest consternation in the caravan. The réis, who, under the circumstances, might have been accused of imprudence, attempted to dispute this topographical theory, maintaining that the Resort of Vipers lay more to the south, to which the rejoinder was :

“It is of the *Country* of Vipers, the *Beled-el-Lefâa*, that you speak. That, undoubtedly, lies away to the south, but the place where you are encamped is the Resort of Vipers. Look !”

And the sheik of the douar pointed to a multitude of reptiles swarming upon the sand, writhing in the grass, and interlaced among the branches of the mimosas and bananas.

But it was not only on the spot indicated by the sheik that these reptiles were collected; for we were so infested by them that one could hardly put his foot down without treading on them: and the wonder was, how, during the half hour we had been there, we had not before perceived them, and how we escaped their bites.

Soon, however, our presence appeared to irritate them, for we heard not only hissings about which there could be no mistake, but also that horrible rasping sound produced by the scales of serpents as they intertwine with each other. Besides the cerastes, or horned viper, there were swarms of serpents there, of many different kinds, ranging in size from the length of an ordinary viper to the respectable one of four or five feet. Among them I recognized the one called the *hannesch*, a reptile comparatively harmless, its bite producing nothing worse than simple inflammation; but, on this occasion, for a snake of almost respectable character, he had associated himself with a particularly disreputable company.

The réis was right on one point, for the Country of Vipers lay some thirty leagues to the south of us, in the Khaulan tract. This country, covered with grass and *nabacks* (*zizy-*

phus lotus), literally teems with reptiles, which make their way to the water-course on which we were encamped, finding along its fertile banks plenty of frogs, toads, jerboas and rats for their subsistence.

While the discussion was still going on between the réis and the sheik, a piercing cry was heard, followed by a frightful bellowing of camels. At this sound a kind of panic appeared to possess the caravan. Men and beasts all took to flight, dispersing, *sauve qui peut*, in every direction away from the stream. The camels which had already lain down, terrified at the bellowing of the first one bitten by a snake, rose up suddenly, and, heedless of the calls of their drivers, fled wildly away. In the confusion, some of the men and women trod on serpents hidden in the grass, and were bitten; and then the cries of human beings and of quadrupeds blended into one great, heart-rending wail, which must have been heard far and wide over the desert; nor did the fugitives stop until they had reached the douar, about a quarter of a league from the stream.

On examining the injured, it was found that twenty men and women had been bitten, and twelve camels. Two of the latter, which were struck in the muzzle by the serpents, as they stretched their long necks out upon the grass, died: the others were saved by cauterization. The human sufferers were submitted to similar treatment; their wounds being seared with red-hot reaping-hooks, and then bathed with a lotion prepared from alkali, of which I always carried a flask with me, and some of which, diluted with water, I also made them swallow. Amulets, talismans, and the preventive remedy already described by me, were also brought into requisition by the women of the douar.

The people bitten suffered intense pain in the parts immediately affected: the body and limbs became cold, the face livid and discolored, and the patient threw up matter sometimes of a blackish, and sometimes of a sanguineous appearance: the saliva was frothy, the eye fixed and hag-

gard, with the pupil very much dilated, the perspiration copious and cold, the pulse hardly perceptible, the sensations benumbed, except at the locality of the bite, and the whole nervous system highly excited. Then convulsions supervened, so violent that six men could hardly hold down the sufferer.

In spite of all our care, five or six of the patients died.

Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni was overwhelmed with despondency, regarding this event as a bad omen for the rest of the journey. He attributed the misfortune to a spell, which, as he said, a *santan* of Sana had wrought upon him, just as he was leaving that place.

These *santans* are fellows whom the Easterns honor with the degree of saints, but who, in Europe, would be locked up in lunatic asylums. Knowing themselves to be objects of veneration, they impose upon the credulity of the people, on whose charity they subsist, going about among them in rags, and sometimes quite naked. Some of them carry small flags attached to sticks.

It was upon one of these hideous, filthy beings that *Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni* happened to cast his eyes as he came forth from Sana, and to this he attributed the evils that had befallen us.

We remained four days and three nights at the douar where we took refuge after our calamity, for the purpose of burying our dead, and to give the convalescent time to recover somewhat before resuming the route. The *khrodja* and the *dellal* took measures for verifying the deceased, and for the disposal of their effects, which, in all such cases, are sold by auction, and the proceeds remitted to their families, or, in default of heirs, appropriated to the use of the mosques and the public domain.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEVIL'S CASTLE.—ARRIVAL AT KHARIBAH.—THE DELUG
OF THE DIKES.

AFTER the prayer of the magh'reb, on the evening of Monday, the seventh of August, we took our departure from the douar, heading our course for Kharibah, our next halting place. This stage was a short one, but a sad, for none of us could think of any thing but the calamity of the fourth. Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni was utterly prostrated. Some wept in silence; others uttered loud lamentations; the songs with which we used to cheer our way were hushed.

The country became more broken as we advanced, the outlines of the mountains and hills running into curiously fantastic forms. Old ruined castles, gothic cathedrals, and the remains of palaces, with long colonnades and stupendous porticos, were all visioned out to us by these rocks, among which weird will-o'-the-wisps for ever flitted, supposed by the Arabs to be the souls of the ancient Sabians. We passed at the foot of a mountain called, in the language of the country, *Kasr-el-Cheïtan*—the Devil's Castle—for information respecting the origin of which name I applied to Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni.

"Seek not to know," replied he—"the devil is the enemy of mankind; let us try to protect ourselves from his malice, and be content in ignorance of his mysteries."

"But tell me, at least," said I, "what that mountain has to do with him?"

"Nothing that I know of," answered the réis, "except that it is a biding place of the enemy of man; a place haunted, from base to summit, by emissaries of hell. Allah protect us!—listen to this frightful story of two rash men who went there and never returned:

* Arnaud and Wayssières, who had previously related the adventure to the author.—*Trans.*

“One evening in the month of moharrem of the year 1240, the silence that reigned over these mountains was suddenly broken by the steps of advancing dromedaries, soon after which could be distinguished the forms of two cavaliers, who were heard saying to each other :

“‘This, then, is the place, Yusuf—the Kassr-el-Cheïtan?’

“‘Yes, O Mohammed,’ replied the other, ‘this is it.’

“And, as they spoke, they reached the foot of the mountain and began to ascend it, when some wandering Arabs who happened to be passing entreated them to desist, telling them that no one ever went up that mountain, which is the abode of Satan.

“‘What matter for that!’ retorted the cavaliers; ‘we have vowed to bring to our sweethearts some wonderful things that nobody else could obtain for them; that vow we go to keep.’ And they went on their way up the mountain.

“Then the Arabs, who again entreated them to return, seeing that their efforts were useless, went on their way, reciting the *Fatha*,* but they had not gone far when they saw a strange light glimmering at the top of the mountain, accompanied by a fearful sound and cries of distress, and then all was silent as before.

“Next day they recounted every where how two cavaliers had gone up to Kassr-el-Cheïtan, from which they had not been seen to return; nor did the families or friends of these two cavaliers ever hear any news of them again, except, indeed, a report that the devil and his imps had roasted them alive.”

When the réis had concluded I burst into a fit of loud laughter, at which he turned pale and said :

“Have I not sorrows enough to bear up against, that you must thus bring more upon me by the levity with which you look upon such a horrible event?”

* The first chapter of the Koran. *Fatha* means *opening*.

"Be not troubled, Sidi," answered I, with as much gravity as I could command. "Be of good cheer; in my country, too, people tell foolish stories, with which they frighten weak-minded persons and small children; but such fear is unworthy of a man like you, as I will prove to you. How long will it take the caravan to file past this mountain?"

"Half an hour, or less." ✓

"Good. I will employ that time in making my way to the top of it."

"What!" exclaimed the réis, "in spite of what I have told you?"

"Because of what you have told me," replied I; and, leaving him to recover from his consternation, I turned to my companions of the caravan, asking whether any of them would accompany me on a visit to the hosts of Kassr-el-Cheïtan—an invitation which they declined with horror, one and all, some of them even running away from me when I made a show of approaching them. A few, however, endeavored to dissuade me from my undertaking; but after the course I had taken I did not choose to withdraw, lest I might have been set down as an empty braggart; though, on the other hand, by carrying out my design I should subject myself to the suspicion of having commerce with evil spirits.

Dashing my dromedary, then, across the rocks and bushes at the foot of Kassr-el-Cheïtan, I commenced ascending the spiral path that leads to the summit, on arriving near which I thought I heard a murmuring sound as of human voices.

I rode towards the spot from whence the sound appeared to proceed, where I found a large opening in the rock, slightly concealed by the tall herbage, into which I entered on foot, and had made but a few steps into the cavern when I found myself in utter darkness. I listened—the murmur of voices appeared to come from the depths of the

cave, but soon all became still; and, as I had no means of lighting myself on the way, I returned, fearing lest I might fall over some precipice, if I ventured any further in the dark. I thought, besides, that I must have been deceived with regard to voices issuing from the cave, and that the sounds heard by me must have come from the caravan below. Continuing my ascent, therefore, I reached the summit of the mountain, where I found myself upon a plateau, in the center of which there was a deep pit, which I at once recognized as the crater of an extinct volcano. I leaped off my dromedary, and, rolling a large stone down into the gaping abyss, heard it splashing into water below; for the ascending waters—as in other instances observed by me—had evidently extinguished the fire and lava of the crater, and converted it into a lake. The splash of the stone was immediately followed by a rumbling sound, like the mutterings of distant thunder, which reminded me of the vaults of the Pantheon, at Paris.

I remounted my dromedary, and commenced to descend the path, when, suddenly, a brilliant light shot across it some distance in advance, the source of which, owing to the spiral nature of the path, I could not perceive until I had taken another turn. Strong-minded enough, however, to reject the idea that the flames of the infernal regions had got so high up, I supposed for a moment that one of our chouafs had ventured on the mountain, when, on turning an angle of the path, I saw before me seven or eight men, with none of whom I could claim acquaintance. Each of them was armed with a gun, richly carved and damaskeened; their garb consisted of a red sommada bound round the head, a yellow fouta girt over the hips and falling to the middle of the thigh, and a leathern girdle, worked with silver and garnished with two pistols and a scimitar. They were fine looking fellows in every sense of the term, with handsome, intelligent faces, and figures of perfect mold; but, although there was nothing menacing in their looks,

their sudden appearance certainly discomfited me a little, though I put as good a face on the matter as I could.

"Where are you going, my friend?" asked one of them who appeared to be their chief, addressing me.

"Down from Kassr-el-Cheïtan, to rejoin my companions below," replied I.

"Know you not that he who has been to the top of this mountain never gets to the bottom of it again?" continued the speaker.

"So I have been told."

"Why did you come, then?"

"Because I could see no just reason why an inoffensive traveler might not return safe and sound, after having explored the mountain."

"But it is the residence of a *genius*, who does not choose to have his retreat intruded on by strangers."

"If a *genius*," said I, "he could have no necessity to maintain armed men for his defence: his will ought to be sufficient to discomfit his enemies. I believe in no such power save that of Allah, my master and yours."

"Your words are those of wisdom," rejoined he—"let not your actions belie them, and you may yet escape the consequences of your imprudence. Wait here while I consult the *genius*: but attempt not to fly, or death shall smite you before you have made ten paces down the mountain slope;" and with these words he disappeared into the cavern, followed by his band.

Before I could determine what course to take, he reappeared, with his followers, and said, approaching me—"Go, and may Allah protect thee!"—to which benediction I responded—"His blessing be upon thee and thine!" and, although possessed with emotions which others would probably have experienced in similar circumstances, I rode quietly away, like a man who saw nothing strange in the adventure, and, urging my dromedary to a trot as soon as I arrived at the base of the mountain, soon rejoined

the caravan, the bells of which I heard tinkling in the distance.

They were frightened when they saw me coming ; but I rode up to the réis and traveled alongside of him, in silence, for some time, until, finding that his curiosity did not lead him to question me, I broke the ice, by saying—" Well, here I am."

"For that you should return thanks to Heaven," said the réis.

"Some are due to my boldness, perhaps," rejoined I ; "would you like to hear about my adventure?"

"Relate it, if you will," answered he ; "but Allah be my witness that I have not asked you."

I could see by his manner that he longed to hear it, but he was afraid of causing some new calamity by asking. Telling him to be of good heart, therefore, I recounted to him all that had passed ; but he only shook his head when I had finished.

"Do you doubt the truth of what I have told you?" asked I.

"Far be it from me to do you such injustice," answered the réis ; "but one thing is certain, that you must owe your safe return either to Allah or the Devil. For my part, I am willing to believe that it is to Allah."

"Chance had something to do with it, Sidi ; the chance which took me to the Kassr-el-Cheïtan at a time when those who dwell there dared not injure one who traveled with a caravan so strong as ours. Seeing the determination with which one traveler ascended their mountain, they supposed that the others, too, had come to explore its mysteries, and were ready to rush to the assistance of the one who first went up, or to avenge his death."

"You do not believe, then, that Kassr-el-Cheïtan is haunted by evil spirits?"

"I believe it to be haunted by a band of robbers, who dwell there undisturbed, thanks to the superstition that pre-

vents people from exploring their fastness. That caravans passing here escape their rapine, is owing to the fact that, lest their den might be discovered, they carry their marauding into distant regions. Here they have their head-quarters, however, where they conceal their prisoners and booty, relying for their security on the bad reputation of the mountain."

"And what do they subsist upon?" asked the réis.

"On the plunder of the caravans."

But he only shook his head, saying, "You explain the matter to suit yourself."

"I explain it according to the dictates of common sense," rejoined I; "recollect the great cistern on the top of the mountain, a circumstance which, in itself, renders it an eligible place of abode, and one which you can readily turn to your own advantage by divulging what I have discovered, driving these pretended demons from their stronghold, and establishing, in case of necessity, a new halting-place here, where caravans can take in water, and enjoy repose."

"To that water may Allah preserve me from ever having recourse!" exclaimed the réis, "for the Devil dwells in the mountain, and the cistern is guarded by a dragon, which devours all who dare to approach it."

These were beliefs of which I found it impossible to disabuse the réis, who further described the dragon as a huge monster, having the head of a horse, the mane of an African lion, and the body of a serpent, destitute of hind feet, but having two before, formed like an eagle's claws. This being, he told me, had once carried off a réis who was traveling in charge of a caravan of immense value, and who, like the two cavaliers, was never heard of again. On my asking him how it happened, then, that I had escaped, he said that the dragon might have been sleeping, or, having lately dined, had no occasion for me.

My story was soon known all through the caravan, adding to the repugnance which the people had already ex-

pressed toward me. Most of them believed that I was in league with the demons of the mountain; the mildest opinion given with regard to my escape being, that the dragon was either asleep, or feared that my flesh might not agree with him.

The light, we are told, leaks in everywhere; yet superstition is still alive upon earth. The torch of civilization has not yet scared it away, for we meet here and there with the same old myths and the same old monsters; and in this land of Mareb did I thus find the ancient beast "with the gaping jaws," as St. Augustine says, a kind of dragon of the Hesperides.

Toward midnight we arrived at Karibah, a village situated upon a little plateau, at the foot of which runs a brook, the Wadi-Béni-Djabr, the murmuring of which fell pleasantly upon our ears. The Arabs delight so much in the sound of running water that they say the man who listens to it cannot be utterly miserable, no matter how deep his griefs may be. Above this village rises a great mountain, surmounted by a citadel, in which very citadel it is said that the inhabitants of Saba took refuge, at the time of the catastrophe by which their capital was destroyed, the inundation caused by the bursting of the dikes at the outlet of a lake fed by seven rivers—a lake by which an immense tract of country, now a wild and sterile desert, was once irrigated.

This Deluge of the Dikes forms an important epoch in the history of Arabia. An empire—that of the Tobbas—was annihilated by it. The Sabian tribes which escaped migrated into other parts of Arabia, into Syria, into Palestine, into Persia, and even to the shores of the Mediterranean, that inland ocean previously unknown to them except by tradition.

CHAPTER VI.

A COLONY OF SABIANS.—ARRIVAL AT MAREB.

THE village of Kharibah, as I have said, is situated upon a plateau, overlooked by a high mountain, on the summit of which there stands a citadel, concerning which many legends are circulated, some of them dating so far back as the times when the Sabians were a great nation—times of which the modern Arabs appear even now to have a glimpse, as through a mist. There is one important fact connected with this citadel: it is still occupied by the descendants of the ancient race, numbering, at the present time, some two hundred souls. These people, both men and women, keep themselves strictly aloof from the Arabs of the plains, communicating with them only when compelled by absolute necessity. Their principal occupation is the manufacture of baskets and mats. Their religion, which is shrouded in mystery, may possibly be that of ancient Saba. Thus has this little colony apparently dwindled down through the ages into the remnant of that civilization of three thousand years ago, of which we have a glimmering in the pages of the Bible.

We encamped close by the village, beneath the shade of some mimosas and nabacks, taking care to keep at a respectful distance from the water. Near the village are some pits of mineral salt, the working of which is open to all. This branch of industry secures a certain livelihood to the inhabitants, who carry on a trade in salt with Sana and other villages of Yémen.

A caravan being quite an event in this country, daylight had no sooner dawned than we were surrounded by Kharibats, who were acquainted with several members of our company. Trade soon came into operation, the inhabi-

tants of the citadel, even, descending into the plain to take part in the proceedings. These were the people I was most anxious to see. Addressing the first of them I met, I offered him my hand, saluting him with the usual *salam-leikum*, civilities which he declined, however, to receive. I afterward learned that these ancient Sabians are looked upon as unclean. They speak the Arabic tongue with purity, possessing also a language understood by themselves alone, which, in all probability, bears the same relation to the ancient Yoctan, or Sabian, as the modern Romaic does to the ancient Greek. Thinking it possible that I might recognize their language from the form of the letters used by them, I inquired whether any of them could write, but was answered in the negative. No Arab of the plain can speak their dialect; no Arab of the plain has ever eaten or drank with them; nevertheless, in the way of trade, the Arabs neither decline to accept their articles of commerce nor their money. These, however, they are careful not to receive from the hands of the venders direct, nor until they have pronounced over them, with many grimaces, certain words of exorcism and purification.

The Sabians affect a costume somewhat similar to that of the Arabs of the plain—that is to say, they go all but naked. Their sheik was stated to be more than a hundred years old. I tried hard to obtain an interview with him, but failed, as he never left the citadel then, and they would not permit me to enter it: nor, to any questions put by me regarding these people, could I get any reply except from the Arabs of the plain, in whose veracity I have no great confidence—my long experience of the prejudices of that people having taught me to put no faith in information furnished by them.

Respecting the authenticity of the ancient Hamyratie and other inscriptions existing at Kharibah, there can be no doubt. The first of these with which I met was in the village, amid some scattered ruins. This writing was reduced

to nearly an illegible condition. Another was embedded in a shepherd's hut, built out of the ruins of Saba: a third I found in the court-yard of a private house, engraved upon an enormous block of granite split down the middle. Some of these inscriptions were copied by Arnaud, to whom I have already alluded.

We devoted the whole of Tuesday, the eighth of August, to repose, breaking up our encampment, as usual, about sunset; for, although our sick people were still suffering, they were sufficiently convalescent to bear the march to Mareb. During the stage, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni came to me, saying in a melancholy tone,

"Our sick are but slow to recover, Hadji."

"A matter which you seem to take greatly to heart, Sidi, judging from your face," rejoined I.

"True, but there are other causes of concern. It is not our sick people only that are in danger of death,—the scimitar, the bullet, may finish the life of a man in the rudest health. As for me, I trace all our misfortunes to the accursed *santon* who glowered upon me as we left Sana; but others, believing yours to be the evil eye, attribute to you the sad event at the Resort of Vipers, saying that you visited Kassr-el-Cheïtan to make a new compact with the Devil. You have medicines with you, Hadji, perhaps talismans: cure our sick, then, if you would save your life, be you physician or be you sorcerer."

"The drugs that I have with me," said I, "are not specific for the bite of serpents."

"Then may the will of Allah be done!" exclaimed the *réis*, with a deep sigh, and we went on our way in silence.

The mountains through which our path now lay were composed of masses of granite, streaked with black lines from summit to base, many of them, touched by the rays of the setting sun, which was sinking behind the citadel as we left Kharibab, displaying curious effects of light and shade. For some distance the road wound among the dark

gorges of these mountains, when, about nine o'clock, we emerged into a district of sand hills, in which our camels sank to their bellies. Some of them fell, two or three breaking their legs in their struggles. The maimed animals were killed and bled according to the mussulman rites, and then distributed, as provision, among the members of the caravan. Several of the camels which fell, although apparently unhurt, obstinately refused to get up again: the packs of these were taken off and placed upon the other camels, and they were left where they lay, in hopes that they might eventually rejoin the caravan. Looking back when we had got to a considerable distance, we could see their long, flexible necks straining after us from the sand, in their struggles to get free, in which some of them succeeded, and followed on our track at their best speed.

The heat, during this day's recess, had amounted to 57 degrees of the centigrade thermometer—a bad presage for the night that was to follow, fortelling of the coming storm. The wind blew heavily from the west, driving before it clouds of hot sand, until about eleven o'clock, when it seemed as if all the winds of heaven were let loose at once, and came raging together from every point of the compass; the sand with which they were impregnated producing a most unpleasant effect upon the skin, by absorbing the perspiration. From the same cause the lungs became contracted, the respiration short and difficult, and the heat of the internal structure almost insupportable—the very camels snorting violently as their flanks heaved up and down. It was curious to see these animals struggling through the tempest, their legs invisible in the clouds of sand, while their bodies moved forward without any apparent means of locomotion. The heavens were totally obscured, not a star being visible by which we could steer our course along the obliterated track. It was the terrible simoom of the desert that had fallen upon us—but, fortunately, Mareb was close at hand.

Our chouafs now dispersed themselves in all directions, to recover, if possible, our lost road; but, so enveloped were they by the fog of sand, that we could see them only at a short distance, even when they moved along the ridges, though we heard their cries, mingled with the yelps of jackals—the latter seeming to disquiet our réis, who, like all Arabs, looked upon the jackal as the lion's out-runner. Nor was it long before we heard, though at a great distance, the fearful roarings of the king of beasts—a sound at no time pleasant to the ear, but still less so in the midst of a hurricane, when the darkness in which we were shrouded rendered the danger more difficult to face. This lion, however, kept himself at a respectful distance from us.

After six hours of strife with the mad storm, which seemed ready, at each moment, to sweep away the whole caravan, man and beast, hurling them to and fro with wild fury, a frightful yell arose above the tempest, and several members of our company rushed upon me with threats and curses. The foremost of them, a man named Hamza, advanced upon me with uplifted scimitar, crying, in a voice trembling with rage and fear—"Quell the tempest you have brought upon us, Hadji, or else I slay you where you stand!" At this instant a flash of lightning, so vivid that it seemed to wrap the earth in fire, struck us all with momentary blindness, while the thunder, silent until then, burst over our heads with a deafening peal. The crowd around me seemed paralyzed with fear. Hamza dropped his uplifted arm, stupified by the shock, and I availed myself of circumstances to withdraw quietly from the midst of them, carefully avoiding any appearance of running away.

Now the rain came pouring down upon us in torrents, a rain so hot, though, that it half smothered as it streamed over us, while the thirsty sand sucked it up as fast as it fell. But the camels knew that their toil was drawing to a close, heralding, by their frequent bellowings, our approach to an inhabited neighborhood: for our chouafs had signaled

Mareb, or, rather, the high mountains beyond which it stands.

At length, on Wednesday, the ninth of August, 1844, at six o'clock in the morning, ten days after our departure from Sana, from which we had made nine stages, we found ourselves before Mareb, where we set up our tents beneath the shade of some mimosa, tamarind and naback trees, with which the country is thickly planted.

Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni had hardly given his orders for the disposition of the encampment, when some men of rank arrived among us, as a deputation from the Sovereign of Mareb, who, forewarned by those mysterious runners who carry dispatches in the desert and act as spies upon the caravans, sent them to demand payment of alien dues, with an invitation to me, as a stranger, to visit him at once.

While I was dressing in my tent, in order to make myself presentable to the prince, the réis came to me, saying :

“Having bound myself to protect you, Hadji, I come to inform you that these emissaries of the Nagib of Mareb are making inquiries about you from the members of the caravan, from whom, doubtless, they will gather no favorable report.”

“But why should the Nagib trouble himself about me ?” asked I.

“Remember,” answered the réis, “that you stand now upon the soil of the enemies of European civilization, yea, of all civilization. Sana, which we have left behind us, is the last settlement of civilized Arabs: here, we are among the independent tribes, whose customs, whose laws have nothing in common with those of the Arabs of the west. To these customs and these laws, handed down to them by tradition, from time immemorial, they all hold, old and young, rich and poor; and so fearful are they of being tempted to change them by intercourse with other nations, that no stranger is ever welcome among them. They will put you through an ordeal which it will require all your

courage to sustain. May you come out from it as safely as you did from the claws of the devil and of the dragon of Kassr-el-Cheïtan !”

Thanking the réis for his warning, I went forth from my tent, accompanied by Selim, determined to act with prudence, but also with firmness, should circumstances require it. The deputies, who were waiting impatiently for me, surrounded us, and we proceeded on foot to the palace of the Nagib.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ORDEAL.

THE sovereign of Mareb, whose dominions extend over some fifty small villages and hamlets, was called Seid-Abd'el-Rahman, and professed to be a lineal descendant of Abu-Taleb, uncle of the Prophet, though not through the same branch as Ali. His palace was a square tower, situated at the northeastern end of the town. This tower, called Dar-el-Nassr, is very high, and of an imposing appearance, built chiefly from the ruins of Saba, as are many of the dwellings of the modern city of Mareb, and consisting of a ground floor, surmounted by four stories, with a battlemented terrace over all. Beneath the ground floor are vaulted chambers, some of which are used as apartments during the heat of the day, while others serve for state prisons, dungeons, and dens for fierce wild beasts. Walls run round the building, inclosing a kind of courtyard, in which are the gardens and stables, the latter, according to Arab custom, being in the open air.

The ground floor serves as a barrack for the guard, which numbers about forty.

In the first story are the state apartments of Seid-Abd'el-Rahman, if that term can properly be applied to two or three chambers bristling with arms, which cover all the walls and stand in every corner—bucklers of iron and of shark-skin, helmets, battle-axes, coats of mail, cuirasses, scimitars, matchlocks, long, two-edged swords, and all manner of trappings for horse and dromedary.

The second and third floors are occupied by the slaves and the family, the rooms of the latter being decked with mother-o'-pearl, the bright, changing hues of which are supposed to have a cheering effect upon the women condemned to the solitude of the harem.

In the morning the Nagib occupies the fourth story, with his divan, as he can command from thence a view of the city and its environs. In the afternoon he retires to his harem, or to enjoy the siesta beneath the vaults of the building; and, when night comes, he reposes upon the terraced roof, under bowers of basil, and rosemaries, and vines and beans in blossom, which diffuse a delightful perfume, converting the terrace into one arbor.

The building is lighted by thirty windows, those of the harem being grated. These windows, which do not admit much light, are so constructed as to serve for loop-holes in case of attack. A plain staircase of masonry, supported by trunks of trees, leads from the ground floor to the roof. As far as the first floor, this staircase is so wide, and of such easy declivity, that three horses can safely ascend or descend it, abreast; and it is at the door of his state apartments that the Nagib mounts his horse when he goes forth for exercise, or on an expedition. Above the first floor, the staircase contracts its dimensions gradually, dividing as it reaches the second, one branch leading to the apartments of the women, and the other to the fourth story and the terrace.

The floors are formed of rough rafters, which support a trellis of mimosa and naback branches, over which is spread—like asphalt—a kind of cement called *tebby*, found in the

beds of the rivers, which requires no further preparation for use than three or four days' exposure to the sun. There are no draperies of any kind to be seen; no gilded cornices, no luxurious divans, no vessels of gold or of silver. The floors are covered with woolen carpets, or with quilted stuffs, carried up the walls to a height of three feet. Each apartment is surrounded with benches, having plain cushions of wool, covered with cotton cloth. The bowls and spoons are of wooden ware, brought from Constantinople; everything proclaims that intercourse with strangers has made but little innovation here; the whole of this ancient dwelling being just such as we read of in the Bible.

I found Seid-Abd'el-Rahman surrounded by some fifty of his nobles, all handsome men, with bright, piercing eyes; some of them young, others past the middle age. Their long hair fell down upon their bare shoulders, and their forms were of the true Arab type—lean and wiry. For a head-dress they wore the *sommada*, the rest of their costume consisting of a white *fouta* bound round the loins, ornamented with broad bands of red silk. The old men carried each a matchlock, and a long, two-edged sword, suspended by a shoulder-belt; the young men a *sagaie*, a battle-axe and a buckler. They all had pistols and scimitars in their girdles.

The Nagib, a man, at that time, of from fifty-five to sixty years of age, was decked out in all his best, as were his followers. His *fouta*, however, was of silk instead of cotton; instead of a *sommada* he wore a turban, and his weapons were of rich manufacture—the hilt and scabbard of his scimitar being of gold or silver gilt, while the stocks of his gun and pistols sparkled with precious stones instead of mother-o'-pearl or coral.

When I entered the apartment where the Nagib was seated, surrounded by his court, he arose from the bench on which he sat, and saluted me with twenty-one salaams; then, approaching, he took me by the hand, and led me into

the center of the group, where I seated myself upon a hassir, placed for me by a negro slave. When all were ranged around in their places, the Nagib opened the proceedings, saying :

“We know who you are, Hadji, and whence you come; we have heard of your sojourn at Mecca with the Cheriff Hussein and the Imaum of Sana; and our couriers have apprised us of all that has happened on the journey from Sana hither. Wishing neither to deceive nor to lay snares, we thus notify you, and it will be for your interest to be equally candid with us; for we detest deceit: liars meet with no mercy here, death being the punishment dealt out to them when proved guilty. Answer plainly, then—what motive has brought you hither?”

“I have heard, Sidi,” replied I, “that your country resembles neither Europe nor Africa, nor yet any other part of Asia that I have traveled through, and that I should here see many things not elsewhere to be found. This, and this alone, is my motive for coming here.”

“And wherefore do you desire to see these things?” asked the Nagib.

“Ask of Allah,” said I, “why some men love noise, others silence; why some seek the crowd, others solitude, and then I will tell you why I would like to descend into the depths of ocean and see the monsters that inhabit it; why I long to visit the firmament and the stars that shine over us. Allah has endowed me with admiration of His works, wherefore I would visit even the shifting sands, and brave the storms of the desert.”

After some further questions, the Nagib told me that it would be necessary for me to submit to a certain ordeal imposed upon all strangers coming to Mareb. Then, to the clapping of his hands, there came four negro slaves, who, courteously seizing me, stripped off all my garments in the midst of the assembly, and anointed me with butter from head to foot, after which they thumped and basted me

all over; a process, however, to which I had long been accustomed, and one beneficial in its effects, softening the skin, and rendering the muscles pliant. This done, other slaves entered, bringing a fouta of red silk and a sommada, with which they invested me.

Then the Nagib again advanced towards me, and, taking me by the hand, led me to the *sirir*, where he seated me alongside of him, saying that, before submitting me to the ordeal we should partake, together, of the *dief*, which, on his again clapping his hands, was brought in upon a mat by other slaves. This repast was composed of meat, dried dates, honey, and camel's milk, all contained in wooden bowls—a repast simple in its elements, but served up with the greatest neatness.

After the *dief*, we recited the first chapter of the Koran, and then the ordeal commenced.

Leading me to the terraced roof of the tower, they told me that if I had really no mysteries to conceal from them I should not hesitate to throw myself from the battlements, confident that the Prophet would not fail to save me from harm by his miraculous intervention. It was no time to retreat, for the least show of hesitation on my part might have been fatal. I had heard at Sana, and elsewhere, that by displaying courage and presence of mind among these *freemasons*, as they are called, one is sure to pass safely through their ordeals, no matter how severe; without a moment's hesitation, therefore, I dashed forward to precipitate myself from the height, but my feet were hardly off the ground when I was seized by four vigorous arms.

Expecting to be congratulated for my courage, I looked around. All were calm and imperturbable, the Nagib merely saying: "You have put a bold face on this matter, certainly, but anybody might have done the same: besides, we know not whether your courage was not simulated and your heart shaken with fear. Let us now descend to the vaults beneath the tower. There, in your conflict with

savage beasts, we shall see whether you possess the courage of a true man—the heart to dare, and the hand to strike.”

A shiver ran through me at this announcement, but I looked steadily at the Nagib, and signified my readiness to proceed. We descended in silence from the terrace, and entered the basement of the tower, where two slaves attached a key to my girdle, placing in my left hand a copper lamp, and in my right a scimitar.

“Go through the vaults,” said the Nagib, “until you reach the dens, which are five in number, containing each a panther. The key in your girdle is that of the middle den. Walk straight forward—the doors will open of themselves to admit you. Watch carefully the light of your lamp, and turn not to look behind you whatever happens; for the first duty of a good and brave man is to keep the lamp of his heart ever alight, and never to go back upon his steps.”

Upon this, the assembled courtiers made way for me, and I found myself upon a marked-out path, which I followed, but had not gone many paces, when I heard the door of the vaults shut behind me, and found myself alone in this subterranean region, without any means of escape. Keeping my eyes fixed on the ray of pale light thrown before me by the lamp, I traversed, with a sad heart, the long, narrow passages which formed the first part of my journey, until I found myself in a cavern of considerable size. The sides of this cave were of solid rock, upon the dark ground of which grotesque shapes were figured out by the sparkling stalactites and stalagmites; while, upon the damp floor, brambles interwove themselves among the windings of the rock, around the moss-covered stems of which horned vipers were winding their gray coils, while swarms of other reptiles twisted and twined along the ground. From this cavern I at first saw no door of exit, and was in hopes that my task was nearly finished, when, suddenly, an immense stone

detached itself noiselessly from the rocky wall, opening a new passage before me, and closing after me when I had passed through.

The passage into which I now entered was built in masonry, of large cut stones. Proceeding on my course, I passed through several other galleries—some of which were so low that I could not get through them without stooping—on either side of which I saw the doors of dungeons deeply imbedded in the thick walls. At length I entered a large hall, which appeared to be the center of the frightful network traversed by me, and the sepulcher of the wretched strangers condemned to perish of hunger in these caverns; for the ground was covered with human skeletons and skulls, strewed upon a deposit of bones reduced to dust, indicating many generations of victims. A charnel-house odor pervaded this vault, through which the air vibrated with a dull, moaning sound. I experienced an oppressive sense of sadness as I regarded these miserable human relics—a sadness which bears testimony to the sympathy that unites man to man, for it arises from our share in the sufferings of those who have died before us.

Hastening to leave this abode of horror, I walked rapidly to the further end, where, however, I could find no trace of a door, although I tried the wall every where with the hilt of my cimeter. I decided, therefore, to retrace my steps through the dismal charnel-house and regain the gallery by which I had entered, but on arriving there I found the entrance closed by a door barred with iron, and solid as the rock.

Then a frightful idea occurred to me. I suspected that the Nagib and his counselors, either from being dissatisfied with my replies to their questions, or from some other reason, had left me to die in this charnel-house, where so many wretched mortals had already ended their days. Already I fancied myself moldering away among these horrible

skeletons, and, falling on my knees, I was about commending myself to Heaven when a door, which I had not hitherto observed, owing to its being of the same color as the rock, opened before me. This door, which was near the one by which I had entered the dungeon, led me to the foot of a rickety staircase, the steps of which tottered beneath my feet. Entering by these into other low, winding galleries, similar to those through which I had already passed, I found on every side the same traces of cruel barbarity: dungeons built into the masonry of the walls; sepulchers so deep down that the most piercing cries of wretched beings buried alive there could never reach the upper air.

Suddenly, I thought I heard a smothered sound as of growls, a few paces in advance, when, on hastening in the direction from which it came, I discovered, to my great joy, that I was before the dens of the panthers—for now it was death for death, which was far preferable to being buried alive.

Laying down my lamp I advanced boldly toward the den that had been described to me, holding my cimeter in my right hand, the key in my left. The instant I opened the door the panther drew back to the further side of the den, crouching down in readiness for a spring. I felt his pestilential breath blowing upon me as he glared at me with his flaming eye-balls, unsheathing his terrible claws, and uttering a long, low growl. At this moment I raised my cimeter, and, drawing the door toward me with all my strength, was about rushing into the den to attack the panther before he could spring upon me, when an immense iron plate shot came down through grooves in the rock and fell between me and the animal.

A brilliant light now shone all around, displaying to my view the Nagib, attended by his suite.

"It is written, O Hadji," said he, addressing me, "that you are not to die thus."

Then, ascending from the dungeons, we returned to the apartments of state, where each took the place previously occupied by him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ORDEAL—CONTINUED.

“ALLAH be praised!” said the Nagib, addressing me. “So far you have come bravely through the trials; we are now going to take counsel on the answers you have made to us, and to decide your fate according to the opinion of the majority with regard to your words and actions.”

Hereupon four slaves—the same by whom I had been rubbed down—conducted me into the ante-chamber, where the guard kept watch.

Man is “wonderfully made.” I had faced with indifference the leap from the tower, the glaring eye-balls of the panther—but now that immediate death no longer threatened me, it was with but a bad grace that I submitted to be led to the further vexatious tests in store for me.

I had been in the ante-chamber about half an hour, when the clapping of hands was heard, three times repeated. The guards opened the door, and I again found myself face to face with my judges. At a signal from the Nagib, two of the guard entered with a cushion, on which lay a huge cutlass in a sheath of gold, the hilt of it glistening with precious stones. I was then commanded to kneel down—a command which I promptly declined to obey, thinking that my last moments were come. I told them that if my life was to be forfeited they must take it as I stood. For a moment no one stirred, and I was in hopes that I had gone safely through another test,

when the Nagib again signaled, and the four slaves, once more seizing upon me, placed me forcibly in a kneeling posture, in which they held me with iron grasps, in spite of my efforts to rise. Then the Nagib, taking the cutlass off the cushion, unsheathed it, and handed it to a personage who appeared to be the state executioner, who whirled it several times around my head, the broad blade flashing as it whizzed close by. Seizing me by the hair with his left hand, the headsman then bent my head over on one side, and applied the edge of the sword to my neck.

It felt cold. Under no circumstances whatever, not even in sport, is the contact of cold iron agreeable to the cuticle.

Having thus, as it were, marked the spot where the blow was to fall, the headsman raised his right arm to its full extent, and was about to strike, when voices were heard in the ante-chamber, and, at a sign from the Nagib, he dropped his arm and held the sword with its point downward. A guard entered, announcing that a person wished to communicate with the council. This person, who was no other than Hamza, the man who threatened me with his scimitar because I did not quell the tempest, now entered, crying out to the assembly that he came to demand my death.

“Rise, Hadji,” said the Nagib, addressing me, “and say whether this man is known to you.”

On my replying in the affirmative, he ordered my accuser to divest himself of his weapons, and speak.

“This Hadji,” said Hamza, when he had given up his weapons to one of the slaves, “is an emissary of the devil, a magician, and a caster of the evil eye. On the march from Sana to Mareb, he ascended Kassr-el-Cheitan, from which he returned in safety; and as he is the only man who has ever done so, I hereby impeach him of compact with the evil spirit, and of having caused the death of many of our company by delivering them over to serpents.”

“Already,” replied the Nagib, “has the Hadji been con-

demned to forfeit his life. It matters not, then, whether your accusation be true or false, for die he must."

"Grant me one favor, then," rejoined Hamza. "I have made a vow to kill this man with my own hand, if the thing is possible. Let me redeem this vow by executing the sentence you have passed upon him."

"To aid those who have vowed is a sacred duty," said the Nagib; "by your hand, then, let this man die."

Again the four slaves made gestures to me to fall on my knees, an order which I now obeyed, seeing that resistance was useless. The sword was passed from the hands of the headsman to those of my second executioner, who grasped it with savage joy, raised it aloft with his two hands, and was about to bring it down upon me with all his might, when the Nagib stopped him, saying:

"You strike on one condition only—that you lose your own head if you fail to take off that of the victim at a single blow."

"Suppose I kill him at the first blow with another weapon than this," said Hamza, his Arab eyes gleaming with a cunning light, "what then?"

"You can choose your weapons," replied the Nagib."

"Give me my pistols, then!"

"Not so," said the Nagib; "the sentence must be executed with an edged weapon."

"That condition was not made in granting my demand," retorted the fanatic. "I have already accepted your terms, and it is unjust to impose new ones upon me."

"There is truth in the words of this man," said the Nagib. "Give him his pistols."

Hamza seized the weapons with trembling haste, tried them with the ramrod to see that the charges had not been drawn, and pointing them close to my body with both hands, fired. I did not fall; nor did I feel any sensation of pain excepting a sharp twinge at my left side; my *fouta* was on fire there, but it was immediately removed by order

of the Nagib, and my wound, which proved to be nothing more than a slight excoriation caused by the blaze of the pistol, carefully examined. It was evident that the pistols had not been loaded with ball.

"There!" exclaimed Hamza—"I told you that this man was a sorcerer, an emissary of hell!"

"He is neither the one nor the other," said the Nagib—"It is the will of Allah that he should live; and as for you, know that your life is now in his hands."

"I am ready," said the wretched fanatic, whose fury against me was now changed into terror, as he fell on his knees before me, reciting the Besm-Allah: but I desired him to rise, saying that I wished him no harm.

The spectators now congratulated me upon my courage and coolness, but not a word was said about my clemency. For it is a peculiarity of the Arabs to regard clemency as weakness, and cruelty as energy; they respect no man so much as the tyrant who makes himself feared. The chief men grasped me by the hand, and honored me with the salute of the country, which consists in placing the chin first on the right shoulder of the guest, and then on the left. Surgeons, who had been sent for to dress my wound, now arrived; but I begged the Nagib to allow Selim to go to the tents for some of my own remedies, on the application of which, feeling more at ease, I requested permission to visit the town, attended by my servant.

My request was not only granted with politeness, but they insisted upon sending with me one of the chief men as a cicerone, and two guards for my protection. On going out, however, anxious though I was to explore Mareb, that undertaking was, for the present, rendered impracticable by the heat, for the sun was high in heaven, and his rays seemed to run in ripples of fire along the walls of the houses. All was fire—the heaven over us, and the earth beneath, and the walls between which we walked.

Our only refuge, then, was the caravansery, which was

much crowded with the traders and idlers of the town—for nowhere are idlers to be found in such abundance as in the East.

I was going to compare an Arabian caravansery to a French *café*, but that would be incorrect, for a caravansery has no parallel. It is a caravansery, and nothing else: a place where people eat, drink, smoke, buy, sell, gamble, tell stories, get shaved and sleep—the latter occupation being the one in which my companions of the caravan, several of whom I recognized here, appeared to be principally engaged. Having nothing better to do myself, and feeling somewhat overcome by fatigue and heat, I proposed to the chief who accompanied me that we should seek repose.

“It is near my hour for the siesta,” said he, “though I would gladly have forgone it to have done the honors of the place to you; nevertheless, if to sleep is your pleasure, so it is mine.”

We stretched ourselves upon the cushioned benches, Selim and the two guards lying upon the ground, wrapped in their abbayes. Around us were huddled Arabs, Sabians, Jews, Banians, chiefs, courtiers, and slaves: in the midst of which motley company I disposed myself for sleep, with one hand on my cimeter and the other on my purse, in spite of my guards. For, as Lafontaine tells us—“Precaution is the mother of Safety,” and nowhere than among the Arabs is the proverb more applicable in its moral.

CHAPTER IX.

MAREB AND SABA.

DETERMINED to explore Mareb before sunset, I arose from my siesta at three in the afternoon, performed my ablutions and prayer, and, having drank a bowlful of camel's milk, went forth into the town with my attendants.

Mareb, whose pride and wealth in the days of King Solomon rivaled those of Babylon, contains at the present day but some four hundred stone houses. Of these, not more than one hundred are in tolerably good condition. These buildings are inclosed by a wall nearly as dilapidated as themselves, but sufficient, nevertheless, to protect the town in case of any sudden attack by the wandering tribes and brigands who encamp in the neighborhood. This constitutes the modern town, which is situated a little to the south of the remains of ancient Saba, on a great plain fertile in barley, wheat, millet and clover, and fair with gardens. The streets are the reverse of magnificent. The circumference of the entire town is about five thousand paces—nine thousand less, as my guide informed me, than that of the ancient city. It is of an irregular quadrilateral form, and has three gates, known as the *Bab-Sana*, the *Bab-Mekka* and the *Bab-Ainad*.

The stone houses, of which the greater number are only one story high, are vaulted underneath, and have terraced roofs, planted with shrubs. Besides these houses there are dwellings called *eschays*, constructed of branches of trees covered with brush-wood. The mode of building these is simple. Trunks of walnut or mossouack trees are driven into the ground, at intervals of about a foot. In the center of the space inclosed by these a large tree, the branches of which have been cut to a fork, is firmly fixed,

supporting the cross-beam by which the roof, which is composed of naback branches, is supported. The whole of the frame work is then covered with bunches of brush-wood, strongly fastened down with palm-leaf cords. The doorway is formed by a framework of branches—the door, among those who can afford one, consisting of a mat. Small openings left between the upright timbers serve to admit the air. The inside of the walls is covered, to the height of five feet, with a plaster made of camel's dung. The floor is constructed nearly in the same manner as the walls; overlaid, however, with a bed of sand, and, upon that, one of *tebbi*—by which means a flooring as solid and durable as granite is obtained. A hedge of dead bushes is then planted round the structure, into the inclosure formed by which the proprietors drive their animals at night.

There are several mosques in the town of Mareb, one of which, only, is surmounted by a minaret. They are, for the most part, gloomy-looking structures, and are used as schools as well as for worship.

The majority of the inhabitants are Zeïds, as are those of Sana. Besides these there are Mouëllets—half-breeds between the Arab and the Negro—Sabians, Jews and Banians, most of whom are engaged in trade. The other merchants of the place are generally natives of Hadramaut. Altogether, the population amounts to between seven and eight thousand souls.

In Hedjaz and Yémen, so rich are the costumes worn by the Turks and other oriental nations, that to describe them is no easy task; but in Mareb this difficulty does not exist, for the young people go absolutely and entirely naked, while those who are grown up wear nothing but the *sommada* and the *fouta*. Their long, heavy masses of hair, as well as their beards, and their whole bodies, indeed, are anointed, daily, with a coating of grease or butter. The wealthier people wear, out of doors, a broad *djebba* of muslin or flannel over the *fouta*, and their *sommadas* are of

silk. Turbans are worn only by the merchants from Hadramaut, and by a few of the chiefs and principal men.

The costume of the women consists of nothing but a simple cloth, in which they envelope themselves from the chin to the knees, gathering it over their heads when they go out, to protect them from the heat of the sun. The women do not, in general, conceal their faces. They, as well as the men, tinge the edges of their eyelids with *kohol*, and their hands with *henna*—with which latter substance some of the older people also disguise the blanching of their locks. For here, as elsewhere, is to be observed the weakness that leads people to conceal the tokens of advancing age—as if the experience and wisdom that should accompany it were things to be ashamed of!

The sowing of barley and wheat is commenced in October, and the grain is ready to be harvested in May. The grain is smaller, and darker in color than that of Europe. The flour obtained from it is not so white as that of Egypt, but is superior to it in flavor. Millet is sown in May, and harvested from three to four months later, according as the season is favorable or otherwise. About the middle of June is the time for sowing clover, here called *bercim*, which gives from five to six crops each season.

The plow used by the inhabitants is the primitive one of ancient times, constructed of the branch of a tree with a portion of the trunk adhering to it. Upon this is nailed a share, formed of a triangular band of iron, and through a hole at the angle of the wood is run a vertical stem, upon which the plowman leans with his hand, to trace the furrow. These plows are drawn either by oxen or camels. The oxen are yoked to a shaft extending from the plow, by means of a cross-bar coming over the neck, and bound to the hump which these animals have on their shoulders. One camel is sufficient for a plow, and is said to do double the work of a yoke of oxen. The furrows plowed by these machines are not deep; but, so fertile is the soil

here, that little cultivation beyond scratching the surface is necessary.

The gardens lie, for the most part, between the town and the site of the ancient dikes. Although somewhat fallen from their former glories, they are still rich in trees, shrubs and flowers, affording to the citizens a most agreeable retreat; for, in the evenings, they are resorted to by nearly all the population, male and female, who remain there until the night is far advanced. They pass the time in listening to story and song, each householder maintaining his romancers and singers. Among the women, too, there is often found more than one Scheherazade, whose tales are listened to with avidity. Flocks of turtle-doves coo softly in the trees, beneath which the singing, dancing, and other diversions are going on. The gardens of wealthy people are inclosed by high stone walls; those of others by embankments of earth, hedged with prickly plants.

Besides walnut trees, which are very common, I saw in these gardens many trees and plants which are to be met with in Yémen and Hedjas—such as apricots, almonds, bananas, citrons, dates, figs, pomegranates, mulberries, nabacks, peaches, pears, apples, plums and sycamores. The naback (*zizyphus lotus*), grows to a considerable height in this part of the country. It is held in great respect among the Arabs, on account of the passage in the Koran which describes it as growing in Paradise. In its wild state it produces a fruit about the size of a cherry, yellow when ripe, acid in taste, and astringent, but grateful to most people—and, being common all through Arabia, a useful resource for travelers. The fruit of the naback cultivated in gardens is larger, and of a better flavor than that of the wild variety.

In Arabia, Mareb is considered, like Zebid, and Tayef, as a place consecrated to the grape, which flourishes there in all varieties, of every known shade and color, including a kind in which there are no stones. It is cultivated in various

ways—some training the vine upon tall trellises, while others confine it to a height of three or four feet, propping it upon stakes.

Among the plants of the kitchen garden, the most common are the *bamyeh* (*hibiscus esculentus*), the pumpkin, the cucumber, the melon, the *meloukia* (*corchorus olitorius*), and the tomato, all of which grow here to the utmost perfection of size and flavor.

All these fields and gardens are watered now by the Dona only, which river we have already spoken of as a tributary of the Schab. The streams which flowed by ancient Saba still exist, but they have been turned by the sand into a more westerly course. On the banks of the Dona grow thickets of nabacks and rose-laurels, forming a dense curtain, behind which men and women bathe at morning and evening. Here, too, the intrigues of Mareb are carried on, but not without danger; for sometimes a lion or panther appears to the fair one instead of a lover—and even should she escape from these she is subject to be put to death for her infidelity, should it be discovered by her jealous husband.

Having gone through the modern town of Mareb, I asked my guide whether we might not visit Saba, the ruins of which ancient city I wished to see.

“I knew you would ask me that,” said he, in the tone of indulgent superiority assumed by people willing to humor the whim of a child—“if you *will* see it, follow me: and, leading me to the top of a hill formed of human skeletons, the remains of the ancient Sabians destroyed by the deluge of the dikes, or, possibly, of victims immolated by the priests of the Sun in their worship of that luminary, he desired me to look to the right.

I saw the tops of some masses of granite, cropping up through the sand in which they were deeply embedded, the little that was visible of them enabling me to judge of their enormous dimensions. They were but few

in number, but, from their relative positions, it was evident that the structures to which they belonged must have covered an immense area. So utterly dilapidated, however, were they by time, that no architect could guess whether they represented the remains of columns, of arches, of entablatures, or of cornices; for the industrious teeth of ages had spared none of these relics, which were so hacked and hollowed that nothing of their original form remained.

As I was attentively examining these remains, to see whether I could discover any traces of inscriptions, or aught else that might be interesting to the archæologist, Seïd-Ahmed, my guide, told me that they were the vestiges of a temple of the sun, erected by Queen Bilkis. On my expressing my regret that they had been suffered to fall so utterly to decay, he smiled, saying,

“After the destruction of Saba, the people took from it such materials as they wanted for the construction of the new town, abandoning those that were of no use to them; for to what end should they have preserved these worthless stones?”

“For the study of the past,” replied I.

“The past!” exclaimed Seïd-Ahmed; “behold it here, written by the hand of Time more legibly than it could be by that of man, telling us how naught upon earth is durable save the eternal splendor of Allah, how perishable are all the Babels erected by human power. Therefore it is that we of Mareb build us no temples, no palaces like those in the cities of the Christians. Therefore it is that we want neither European nor Mussulman to mingle with us, lest, together with the vanity of civilization, they bring among us its luxury and servility also.”

I might have gone further into this subject with Seïd-Ahmed, whose words appeared to expound a philosophy at once simple and pleasant, but I feared that any discussion might have rendered me liable to suspicion. I only asked him, therefore, whether there were no other relics of the

glory of Saba—upon which he desired me to follow him to the northern side of the ruins, on which we again looked down from a hill.

“Yonder is the site of Haram-Bilkis,” said my guide—“the palace of the ancient Tobbas, restored by Queen Bilkis. There, too, it is written how there is naught but vanity and folly in all that comes from the hand of man—in all that comes not from Allah Himself.”

To account to my readers for the language of Seïd-Ahmed, I must tell them that he was a *taleb*, or *savant* of the country, and one of the confidential advisers of the Nagib, who had taken him into his councils on account of his reputed learning.

The ruins of Haram-Bilkis were similar to those on the southern side. There was nothing more to be seen here, but I asked my guide whether any trace remained of the dikes mentioned in the Koran, by means of which the soil was rendered so rich and productive.

“Nothing,” replied he, “save the ground upon which they stood; but if you will partake of the evening repast with me I will tell you all I know about them and about the ancient city—matters upon which no one here probably is so well informed as myself.”

I accepted his invitation, with thanks. After a frugal repast, served up without any pretension to luxury, Seïd-Ahmed, who possessed more erudition than one might have expected to meet here, gave me the following account of the ancient dikes :

“Some historians, among others Hamza, the author of the ‘History of the Hamyratic Kings,’ have attributed the construction of these dikes to Bilkis; for, in the words of Hamza, ‘Queen Bilkis built, in the land of Saba, the dike called *Sitte*.’ Others dispute this fact, attributing the building of that dike to Lockman, the second son of Ad, and asserting that it was merely repaired by the queen, after it had become dilapidated by the course of time.

“Whatever may be the facts with regard to their founders, these dikes presented an immense barrier of stone, from forty to fifty feet high, extending across the gorge formed by two high mountains, which covered an area of five or six leagues in length by one in breadth, and into which flowed formerly many streams coming from the west and south—some of them from the dominions of the Iman of Sana. By the confluence of these waters this gorge, now a dry desert, became an immense lake, from which supplies of water for the irrigation of the country were drawn, by means of dams and trenches.

Thenceforward this country, subject until then to unseasonable inundations, changed its aspect completely, and became the richest of all Arabia; distinguished above all others for the abundance of its productions, the excellence of its water, the number of its gardens, and the extent of its meadows. The walls and roofs of the houses were incrustated with ivory, gold, silver, and precious stones. Majestic trees every where raised their heads. The region was intersected with canals and flowing rivers.

“And such was the extent of this country that it would have taken a swift horseman a month to traverse it; while he might have gone from end to end unscorched by the rays of the sun, so umbrageous was the foliage of the trees that every where shielded it with their shady branches.

“The inhabitants enjoyed all the comforts of life, for the means of subsistence grew luxuriantly around them. A fertile soil, a healthful climate, water in abundance, an empire in the height of its prosperity—all these combined to make their country proverbial for its greatness, while the people themselves were renowned for the hospitalities extended by them to strangers.

“No king ever resisted them with success. Every tyrant against whom they marched succumbed to their power. The border countries submitted to their authority and

recognized their laws, for their empire was the diadem upon the brow of the universe.

“But, as time went past, they turned themselves from the ways of Allah, who destroyed them by the Deluge of the Dikes, changing their country, as the holy book tells us, from a paradise into one producing nothing but bitter fruits.

“This event came to pass in the reign of Melik, the son of El-Yaman, of the tribe of Béni-Azed.* The waters broke through the Sitte (which was decayed through want of repair, and from the ravages of the hosts of rats and moles by which it was undermined), and the floods spread themselves even to Saba, which they utterly destroyed, scattering far and wide its walls, its monuments, and its buildings, and dispersing its inhabitants, like the Jews, to the uttermost ends of the earth.”

I thanked Seïd-Ahmed for his narration, which, he said, he had reasons for imparting to me, to be explained, perhaps, on some future occasion; and, taking leave of him for the present, I returned to the caravan.

CHAPTER X.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE CARAVAN.

ON my return to the encampment, I found it as busy as a fair, presenting quite the appearance of one, indeed, in its display of games, shows, music, dancing, and tumult, all of which, the people and their costume excepted, reminded me of the fairs of Europe. The tents were all lighted up. Before each of them there was a crowd of men and women—the

* In the year 40 of the Christian era, according to Reiskius—140 according to Sylv. de Sacy.

latter vieing with each other in volubility, as they eagerly examined the wares spread out for show on mats and carpets, and made such acquisitions as their means permitted. Loungers, led thither by curiosity, formed another element of the crowd, in the thickest of which children ran to and fro, yelling, chasing each other, running against everybody, and tumbling head over heels everywhere, while rapid merry-andrews performed their antics in the midst of all.

The chiboque smokers, chewers of *kaad*, and drinkers of coffee strolled from tent to tent, or seated themselves gravely, with their legs crossed, around the strolling *cafés*, gossiping on the current topics, or listening to the romancers.

These strolling *cafés* were established in booths, at one end of which fires were kept up on large earthen kilns, with charcoal and sticks of rose-laurel, for the purpose of boiling the coffee and lighting the chiboques. Benches and mats were disposed in a circle inside these booths.

The most popular of these institutions, however, were the barbers' shops. These barbers—like their brethren of other countries, for it seems to be a branch of the profession everywhere—are the newsmongers of the community. In default of any news to tell, they invent some; for a barber's shop unprepared to furnish news of the freshest kind, at a moment's notice, would soon lose its customers. A shaving-dish of copper, a long strap of leather hanging from the girdle to the ground, razors and a looking-glass, compose the chief outfit of these professors, who pique themselves, besides, on a knowledge of surgery and medicine. It need hardly be said that they are quacks of the worst kind, bleeding people more or less clumsily, prescribing for them, at hazard, medicines of traditional reputation, and treating them for all manner of ailments by a process of firing with bars of red-hot iron. There is nothing so strange in all this, however, if we reflect that time was when the barbers had their corporations in France, where,

under the designation of *fraters*, they, too, exercised the rights of bleeding and purging, as we are told by Molière: but I was surprised at finding in the East a usage which had so long flourished among ourselves.

The arrival of a caravan, as I have said, is looked upon quite as a *fête* in these regions. On quitting the encampment I met crowds of people coming toward it from the town, bringing with them milk, butter, honey, poultry, fresh mutton and camel meat, flour, grapes, beans, fruits of all kinds and *assida*.

Assida is the favorite nutriment of the Arab, being, in fact, his national dish. It is made by thoroughly boiling wheat flour with water, the paste produced by which is put into an earthen or wooden vessel, and saturated with butter and honey poured into a hole in the middle of it. The fashionable mode of eating it is, to clench the hand into a fist, dive it down into the dish, carry it up to the mouth, and suck it vigorously with strong absorption. It is looked upon as correct, also, to lick the fingers thoroughly before again diving into the dish.

Some of my companions of the caravan were residents of Mareb, their return to which place was celebrated with gunpowder and acclamations. On such occasions a spectacle is presented of which it is not easy to give an idea. The relatives, friends and acquaintances of the travelers, including, perhaps, half the population of the place, hurry to meet them, with shouts of joy, dancing, leaping and gesticulating, and making the air reverberate with shots from their fire-arms. The confusion increases when they meet. All are huddled together in an indescribable tumult, embracing friends and strangers indiscriminately, until the latter must think that relations are raining down upon them from the clouds; and, should they wish to profit by this circumstance and make themselves perfectly at home, they have every facility for doing so, the inhabitants being quite ready to

extend to them the welcome given to the returned wanderers.

We are told that among the Scottish mountaineers hospitality is *given*, but never *sold*; and so it is with the Arabs.

When a stranger arrives at a town, or at a douar, he at once finds himself at home. They make no inquiries as to who or what he is, but set before him honey, fruits and milk, if the *diffa*, or evening meal, is not yet ready.

The *diffa* is served up upon a mat or carpet, either in the house, under a tent, or beneath the shade of a spreading tree. It is composed of great dishes of pileau, stewed with joints of fowl and pieces of mutton or of camel's flesh, assida, dried fruit in variety, and milk, always wound up with coffee and pipes.

When the guest is a person of importance, the master of the house or tent invites a select party to meet him. Servants are in attendance, carrying, suspended from sticks, the skeletons of some of the animals which have contributed their meat to the banquet. The guests at *diffa* are bound to eat, whether they have any appetite or not, a departure from this rule being supposed to convey a reflection upon the host. Eat as they will, however, there is always plenty of a *diffa* left, which finds its way to the mouths of the servants, slaves, and poor hangers-on, as soon as the guests have departed.

On the day following the entertainment, the horse or camel of the traveler, which also has been taken good care of, is led to him, and he is put upon his road, with good wishes. Should he desire to remain longer, however, they will entertain him still for two days at the same dwelling, with his animals and servants, if he has any; but on the fourth day he becomes the guest of another house, or tent, beginning with the people of highest quality, and so downwards, until it is convenient for him to resume his journey.

I must not forget to mention that, no matter how low the degree of the guest, no matter how high that of the host, it is the duty of the latter to look after the comforts of the former, attending upon him like a servant.

On this occasion I was the guest of Seïd-Abd'el-Rahmar, who proposed to lodge myself, my two servants, Selim and Mohammed, my black female slave, Saïda, and my five dromedaries, so long as we remained in Mareb; but, considering the short time I was likely to stay there, I declined to avail myself of his hospitality, preferring the freedom and privacy of my own tent. Hardly had I returned thither, however, when I beheld my evening repast and that for my servants borne in upon four huge wooden platters, one filled with meat, another with pillau, a third with assida, and a fourth with fruits.

Every morning, at nine o'clock, and evening at six, a similar attention was shown to me. The meat sent was cut up into small pieces, convenient to take up with the fingers. Pillau, as I think I have already mentioned, is the basis of every Arab meal.

Accompanying the four platters were *goullas*, containing milk and butter for drinking. Butter, in Arabia, is completely liquefied by the heat, and is drank in that state like water.

These provisions were borne in by negroes of magnificent proportions, with skins as shining as if they had been varnished. They inquired whether I ever smoked the *chica*, which is the *narghileh* of this part of the world, except that it is devised from an ostrich's egg, or a cocoa nut, instead of being made of porcelain or crystal. Selim and Mohammed, who delighted in the *chica*, promptly replied that it was one of my particular fancies, shortly after which two or three were sent to me, with *tombac* to smoke in them; but I made them over to my servants, and stuck to the *chibogue*, which does not disguise the flavor of the tobacco.

While the servants were doing justice to the repast, I strolled leisurely forth, to smoke and look around among the tents. As the night advanced the uproar had gradually diminished, quietude and silence beginning to take the place of the tumult which had prevailed until now. Feeling in need of repose, I was returning toward my tent, looking in as I passed at those that were still lighted up, when I perceived one which, although the lights were brilliantly burning within it, was silent as a sepulcher.

Approaching this tent, which was a *café*, I saw that it was full of customers, among whom, however, neither games nor conversation were going on. One and all, smoking their chiboques, or chicas, they sat with their necks stretched forward, and their eyes eagerly fixed upon some object.

I entered. A romancer was recounting a tale, to which they were listening with such absorbing interest that none of them, not even the master of the tent, was aware of my approach. Unfortunately for me, the story was so far advanced when I arrived that I gathered but a slight idea of the thrilling interest with which it must have been imbued, judging from its effects on the auditors. From the few words caught by me, however, I understood that it treated much of *djinn*s, or genii, and *afrits*, or demons, and that it ran chiefly upon the history of a Yagog and a Magog.

On leaving the *café*, I addressed the romancer, asking him what these Yagogs and these Magogs might be, and this is what I learned from him :

The Yagogs and Magogs, according to the Mussulman belief, are small, malignant beings, which, in the latter days of the world, are to spread over and infest the earth, putting the virtue of man to severe tests, and inciting him to evil. Until the advent of that time they are confined behind an immense dike, erected on the extreme eastern verge of the universe, the building of which structure is attributed by the Koran, as well as by the marvelous legends

of Arabia, to Zoul-Karnaïn, the Prophet with the two horns. It reminds one of the great wall built by the Chinese as a defense against the incursions of the Tartars, except that there is a difference between the epoch of that work and the time of Zoul-Karnaïn—a matter, however, to which the Arabs do not attach any importance, seeming, on the contrary, to take delight in confounding the ancient history of other races, transposing dates, and attributing deeds to personages who have no right to them.

Zoul-Karnaïn, one among the thousand prophets recognized by the Mussulman, an entirely fabulous character, composed partly of a mythical contemporary of Abraham, and partly of Alexander of Macedon, is recorded as one of the four invincible kings by whom the world was invaded. These were—Zoul-Karnaïn, Solomon, Nimrod, and Nebuchadnezzar—two believers and two infidels.

Zoul-Karnaïn was gifted with power over light and darkness, to protect and favor him in his expeditions. He had two flags, one white, the other black, by displaying one or the other of which he brought day or night, according to his will, over the country occupied by him. Thus terrifying his enemies, he destroyed them without difficulty.

Two generations of men passed away during his long life.

Allah said to him: "Go forth against all nations, to the four corners of the world." So Zoul-Karnaïn went forth and overran the earth, sparing all who acknowledged him as a prophet, and putting the unbelievers to death. From the extremities of the earth he went to the central regions, where he beheld two immense mountains parallel to each other, the gorges of which, he was told, were inhabited by hordes of hideous and malignant beings, hostile to man and beast alike. These beings lived upon dry brambles, serpents, and scorpions. They howled like jackals, and multiplied to a prodigious extent.

Zoul-Karnaïn marched upon these mountains. On arriving there he beheld a mighty swarm of little manikins,

whose stature was about a cubit. They had red, bloodshot eyes, with glowing eye-balls, immense mouths, claws like those of a lion, and hind quarters covered with long hair, which they disposed about their scaly bodies to protect them from the cold by night and the heat by day. Two long, pendulous ears flapped about the heads and bodies of these creatures, one serving them as a cushion to sit upon, the other as a coverlet.

These frightful beings were Yagogs and Magogs.

Zoul-Karnaïn measured the interval between the two mountains, across which he caused to be built the dike which still confines those enemies of the human race—a barrier behind which they must remain until the latter days of the world. It consists of a high wall of stone, bound together and consolidated with molten copper run between the joints, and farther secured with cramps of iron.

This prince reigned for one hundred and forty years, during which time he built twelve cities, all of which he called Alexandria. He died at Schahrazour (Babylon), and his body, laid out upon a bier, was borne to Alexandria, in Egypt, where it was entombed.

“And how is it,” inquired I of the romancer from whom I gathered the substance of the foregoing—“how is it that these Yagogs and Magogs, if so imprisoned, have the power to torment mankind, as I think you said in the story told by you in the tent?”

“Some of them got out while the wall was building,” replied he.

“I should like to know, also, why he who conquered them was called Zoul-Karnaïn, *of the two horns*?”

“His real name was Iskender Bey—the Prince Alexander,” answered my informant. “Zoul-Karnaïn is only a *takallus*—a surname. Wherefore it was given to him is not exactly known. Some say it was because he had two knobs upon his head; others because the crown worn by him was surmounted by two horns; others, again, on ac-

count of the long tresses into which his hair was bound; while some maintain that the name was given to him in honor of his having subdued both the East and the West.”*

Thanking my friend for his information, I took leave of him and went toward my tent, near which I met Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni making his rounds. A réis, as I have said, is responsible for life and property in his caravan, except in cases of his being overpowered by the passengers, or of imprudence on their part. It was curious to observe the solicitude with which ours watched over his charge—the paternal care which he lavished upon everybody, even the meanest of the djemels.

At every halting-place he would deliver a lecture upon sanitary precautions. If he saw a man going bare-footed he would say to him: “Walk not thus, my friend; the flinty ground mangles the feet, the sand scorches them, and thus blisters are formed between skin and flesh, causing great pain. Walking barefooted, besides, is injurious to the eyes, the lungs, and the constitution generally.”

If he saw any one drinking before the morning meal, or any one in too great a hurry to drink when we halted, he used to say: “Drink not upon an empty stomach, it will cause you to be thirsty all the day”—or, “Do not drink until you have rested awhile; and, above all, never drink water that has been muddled by carriage and by the heat of the sun, until after it has been exposed for a short time to the air.”

When we had resumed our journey he used to go from one end of the caravan to the other, crying out: “See that no one remains behind!—let nobody expose himself to danger by separating from the caravan!”

Well, as I was saying, I met the réis making his rounds, and saying to some as he passed:

* For further information on this subject see *Imperium Ioctanidarum ex Abulfeda*, p. 6; *Historia Imperii vetustissimi Ioctanidarum ex Nowairi*, and *Imperium Ioctanidarum ex Hamza Ispahanensi*, pp. 22, 26, 52 and 58

"Lie with your back to the moon, covering up your face carefully, for a moon-stroke is as bad as a sun-stroke. It produces headaches and colds."

To others he would say :

"Sleep not upon the bare ground, or you will wake up in a fever. Mind what I tell you, or else you will suffer for your folly. He who puts his head in the bran will be pecked by the hens."

I was about leaving him to follow out his rounds, but he begged me to accompany him, saying he had something to communicate.

"If you are concerned about my safety," said I, "pray be easy on that score. I have reason to suppose that I am quite in the good graces of Seïd-Abd'el-Rahman."

"That is not where the danger lies," returned the réis; "you must cure our sick, or else the people of the caravan will have your life."

"I will visit them to-morrow," rejoined I; "but pray understand that I do this not from fear, but simply from a sense of duty, and a desire to make myself agreeable to my fellow-travelers, so far as it lies in my power."

On arriving at my tent, I found Saïda inside it, and Mohammed stretched out by the door, but not seeing Selim, I was about to ask what had become of him, when I perceived him standing close behind me.

"Master," said he, "I follow you, to protect you from the blows of those who may seek to injure you."

I grasped him by the hand. He bowed his head in silence, and lay down by the tent door, alongside of Mohammed. I, too, sought repose upon my cushions; but hardly had I closed my eyes when I was awakened by a deep voice crying :

"Harken, O slaves of Allah :

"He who hovers around us in the night hovers for his death :

“He shall get nothing of ours—nor shall he get back to his friends :

“If he is hungry let him come to us, and we will give him to eat :

“If he is thirsty let him come to us, and we will give him to drink :

“If he is naked let him come to us, and we will clothe him :

“If he is weary let him come to us, and here he shall find repose.

“We travel on our own business, and we wish evil to no man.”

It was the voice of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, who uttered these words from the door of his tent, as well to keep our sentries alive to their duties, as to prevent marauders from undertaking to surprise us.

An hour later, I heard the same voice crying in its deepest tones—

“Ho ! ye *chouafs* ! sleep ye there ?”

To which the *chouafs* replied, one after the other :

“Awake !”

Then profound silence brooded over all for about an hour, when I was again awakened by the same deep voice : and so on, at intervals, until the morning dawned.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE CARAVAN—CONTINUED.

Two days after—it was Thursday, the tenth of August, 1844—soon after the *Salat-el-Fedjer*, or morning prayer, I dispatched Selim to the Nagib with some presents, consisting of a pair of Turkish pistols, a piece of cotton stuff, and some looking-glasses and glass-ware for his wives and children.

In the East—as every where else, indeed—presents contribute greatly to secure one a good reception. If you wish to gain the good-will of Orientals, you must be generous in this respect: otherwise they will look upon you with no favorable eye.

Neither did I forget my friend Seïd-Ahmed, to whom I sent, in his capacity of taleb, a superb copy of the Koran—a perfect *chef-d'œuvre* of the binder's art—given to me by the Grand Cheriff of Mecca, as a souvenir of my conversion to the Mohammedan faith. I wish I had it back again.

This done, I sought Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, and told him that I was ready to visit the sick.

“If you can cure them, may benedictions attend you!” exclaimed he.

We visited the tents of the sufferers, whose condition, in general, was not very serious, the excision and cauterization having arrested the progress of the venom. Nevertheless, there was a certain degree of inflammation about their wounds, resulting from the fatigue of traveling and the heat of the weather. This there could be no difficulty in reducing, under the present favorable circumstances of repose; so I merely ordered poultices of linseed meal to be applied, together with some emollient lotions, convinced that nothing more would be necessary.

We had still to visit the tent of Hamza, to see, as the réis said, “the wife of my worst enemy.” I was on my guard as we entered the tent, where they were anxiously expecting our arrival.

“Welcome, Hadji!” exclaimed Hamza; “may the blessing of Allah enter with you into my tent.”

I made a sign of salutation to him, but did not speak. On inspecting the foot and leg of the patient, I found them in a condition sickening to behold. So tumefied were they as to present no appearance of the natural form, while in the red and purple hues with which the flesh was tinged, I thought I could perceive symptoms of mortification. My

face must have assumed a hopeless expression as I looked, for Hamza said, in a tone of alarm :

“ You can not cure her, then ? ”

“ Allah is great,” said I, and I asked to see the face of the sufferer, in order that I might judge, from the appearance of the features, as to the progress already made by the disease.

“ If she is to die for it, you shall not look upon her face ! ” cried Hamza, scowling upon me with a dark, malignant glare.

Without noticing him, I prescribed some remedies, and retired from the tent with Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, without having exchanged a word with the fanatic who dwelt in it.

“ Should you fail to cure her, I fear it will result badly for you,” said my companion, when we had left the tent.

“ Our destiny is written for us, you know,” rejoined I; and having upset all his advice, lamentations and apprehensions by this dogma of the mussulman, I expressed a wish to accompany him over our encampment.

We threaded the alleys and squares formed by the tents, pausing here and there before the stalls, where I made some of the young girls happy, at a cheap rate, by purchasing a few trinkets for them—the possession of a scrap of stuff, or a bit of glasswork, being something beyond the wildest dreams of many of them. I have already compared the encampment to a fair, and it might also be likened to one of those *fêtes* held in the neighborhood of Paris, and other large cities—one difference, however, being that each stall had its dellal, or sworn auctioneer, by whom the articles were disposed of at public sale.

Other dellals moved about in the crowd, brandishing aloft the articles to be disposed of, which they handed over to the last bidder, if the price suited them.

These dellals receive an allowance of four per cent. on

each sale ; a fourth of which amount they must pay to the réis of the caravan, or, in towns, to the authorities of the place.

In spite of this tax, the business of a dellal is a good one. Persons in good circumstances, but who find themselves in temporary want of money, frequently have recourse to them, employing them to sell articles, which often fetch good prices in consequence of the competition, the proceeds enabling them sometimes to make new purchases.

Thus, at Mecca, I have seen young men of rank sell their weapons and horses to buy slaves who had taken their fancy—while others, on the contrary, disposed of their slaves, no matter how much they valued them, to raise money for the satisfaction of some relentless creditor.

When I had seen enough of the tricks and artifices of the traders, which differ but little from those practiced by the same class in other parts of the world, we went to look at the dances, games, shows and jugglers. In Mareb and Hadramaut, as elsewhere in Arabia, there are six kinds of dance—the *dalloukah*, the *gyl*, and the *lenguy*, which are fashionable among the free people ; and the *shekken-dary*, the *touzy*, and the *tam-tam*, danced only by the slaves.

Among the dances of the free people, the *dalloukah* is the most aristocratic, being the one cultivated by the young people of rank. In dancing it, the girls range themselves in lines facing in different directions, opposite each of which a line of young men is drawn up, musicians taking up their stations to the right and left. All at once, at the sound of the *karaaz*, or flutes, and *darbouka*—tambourines with earthenware frames—the girls move forward, advancing with a slow and measured step, jerking their shoulders about, and gathering themselves together with grotesque contortions and inflections. In this manner they approach a rank of the male dancers, until each one finds

herself facing a young man, or, so to say, nose to nose with him.

Then the girls, swaying themselves to and fro, brush the faces of their partners with their tresses, which are carefully dressed with odoriferous pomatums and perfumes—an allurements which so encourages the partner that they brandish their lances about, close over the heads of the young ladies, who then dance away back to the places from which they started.

The male dancers now advance toward the girls and stop. The girls pass between them, and then retire, dancing to the line which their partners have just left. A change of lines is thus made, on which both advance to meet each other at the middle of the space between them, each of the girls again tossing her tresses against the face of her *vis-a-vis*. At this the young men again wave their lances and shout, their cries becoming more animated as the excitement of the dance increases; and the dancers continue this exercise until they are obliged to stop from exhaustion.

In the *gyl*, which is danced by the middle classes, men and women dance opposite each other, without either advancing or retreating—bending and shouldering about, to the sound of music, to which they vigorously beat time with the right foot, at measured intervals.

In dancing the *lenguy*, while the performers are winding and shouldering themselves about, they strike the ground alternately with either foot, all together with the right foot, and all together with the left, the male dancers uttering deep, guttural sounds, at short intervals.

The *skekken-dary* is a slave dance, in which each of the men seizes a woman by the waist, from behind, with both hands, the woman, in like manner, placing her hands on the hips of a man standing with his back to her. Disposed thus, in a circle, leaning well forward and holding hard on to each other, they move slowly round, keeping time to the

music, the women making their *korral*s ring by striking them together, producing a silvery tinkle which harmonizes pleasantly with the music. These *korral*s are rings of gold, silver, or copper, according to the rank and wealth of the wearer, placed upon the legs of the girls while they are yet infants, so as to become fixtures when the foot grows larger.

The *touzy* resembles the *skekken-dary*, except that the dancers keep their bodies upright instead of bent forward.

The *tam-tam* is the national dance of the negroes. In performing it, they dispose themselves in a double-circle, an inner one and an outer, with the men facing the women. They commence by uttering plaintive cries. Then two of the men advance from opposite sides of the circle to the center, where they engage in a sham combat, displaying all their activity, address and vigor, each trying to upset his adversary by tripping him up, after the manner of our wrestlers. During this performance, the dancers who face the center of the ring wind and balance their bodies to the sound of the music, which they accompany with their voices in chorus.

Having seen all these dances, I went with my guide to another part of the assembly. The games played by the children attracted my attention, as we went along, by their similarity to those common among children in Europe. The top, for instance—here called *zarbut*—was in vogue among them, while some played at “cockles” and “cat,” and others followed a ball which they struck backwards and forwards with sticks.

Further on we came to some puppet shows and an exhibition of the *Karagous*, which is the Arab Punch, or Polichinello. This *Karagous*, however, is a personage who would not be tolerated in Europe, his jokes and conversation being of an immodest, not to say revolting character.

Next, we visited the *Zikreurs* and snake-charmers.

These *Zikreurs* are crazy-looking creatures, who imitate the dancing of the dervishes for the amusement of the crowd. They go in bands of five or six, performing, to the sound of music, a variety of strange posture-dances and balancings, their long hair streaming wildly over their faces and down upon their backs and shoulders, suggesting the idea of bacchanalians in a state of frenzy. One of them, who appeared to be their chief, outdid all the others by the rapidity and duration of the *pirouettes* performed by him with outstretched arms, while he uttered wild and singular cries. By and by the faces of these demoniacs became purple from their exertions, while the perspiration ran off them in streams, until at length, wrought up to frenzy by the music and the cries of the spectators, they fell flat upon the ground in speechless convulsions.

These mountebanks, from thus imitating the dervishes, acquire a certain degree of ascendancy over the credulous people, who believe them to possess the power of curing certain maladies at the moment when they fall exhausted to the ground. At this moment, numbers of people crowd round them with pieces of money—just as certain idiots among us rush after the quack doctors and fortune-tellers who help them to get rid of their cash.

I moved away with disgust from these mountebanks and their dupes, and we found ourselves before a group of snake-charmers.

These performers consisted of seven Beni-Schiddad Arabs from Aïnad, a town lying one hundred and three leagues to the east of Mareb. Six of them were playing upon flutes when we came up; but, on being requested by Abu-Bekrel-Doâni to exhibit their serpents to us, they consented with alacrity.

Having made their arrangements, all seven commenced by putting up their hands as if holding books, while they murmured in concert a prayer addressed to *Sidna-Aïsser*, the patron of snake-charmers. This invocation finished,

the six musicians took their flutes and began to play—the chief charmer spinning with great velocity, in a kind of wild dance, round the palm-leaf basket covered with goat-skin, in which the reptiles were kept.

Suddenly the dancer stopped, and, plunging his hand into the basket, drew out of it an asp, or *buska*, which he whirled about, twining and untwining it until it looked like a braid of greenish-yellow silk. He then wreathed the serpent round his head, like a turban, dancing all the time, while the reptile remained where he had placed it, appearing to accommodate itself to the movements and will of the dancer.

The asp was then placed upon the ground, from which it reared itself perpendicularly—the position of attack taken by it when its haunts are invaded—waving its body from right to left, in time with the music of the flutes.

Then the dancer, wheeling more and more rapidly, in diminishing circles, again plunged his hand into the basket, and again drew from it successively four horned vipers, or *lefâas*. These reptiles, livelier and less docile than the asp, kept themselves half coiled, with their heads slanting forward, ready to strike, as they followed, with gleaming eyes, the motions of the charmer, on whom they darted, with open jaws, when he came within reach, launching their bodies with wonderful swiftness, while their tails appeared as if fixed to the ground, and then again winding themselves into coils.

The dancer parried, with his *abbaye*, these assaults upon his bare legs, the vipers appearing to impregnate the garment with their venom. He then seized one of them behind the head, dancing round and round, and calling in a loud voice upon his patron saint.

Opening the powerful, elastic jaws of the reptile with a stick, he showed us its fangs, from which oozed a whitish, oily substance. Then he held his arm near the snake, which struck him immediately, upon which he redoubled his con-

tortions, as if in an agony of pain, calling all the time upon Sidna-Aïsser, the reptile still continuing to strike, until he withdrew his arm and showed us the blood trickling from it.

Replacing the viper on the ground, the charmer now applied his lips to the wound, squeezing it between his teeth, and still keeping up his dance, while the flutes went faster and faster, until at length he stopped from sheer exhaustion.

As I was confident that this man was an arrant juggler, and that the poison had been extracted from the reptile, I asked him to let me handle it.

“Art thou a serpent-charmer?” asked the Béni-Schiddad — “hast thou a faith implicit in the power of Sidna-Aïsser?”

“Neither the one nor the other,” replied I.

“Should the serpent strike thee, then, thy hour is come,” rejoined he. “Bring hither a hen, or some other living animal, and I will prove the truth of my words.”

Unfortunately for itself, a wretched cat happened to be at hand. It was brought to the charmer, who caused the viper to strike it; immediately after which poor puss fell into convulsions, which lasted for a few seconds, staggered about for a moment, and then fell, stiff and dead, soon after which its nose and eyes assumed a bluish tint.

I need scarcely add that this experiment cured me of any frantic desire to play with the horned viper.

Of these facts I speak from ocular experience: but, although I have investigated the matter closely, I have never yet met with any person who could propound a satisfactory theory upon the subject. I have applied to the charmers themselves, and to the people about them, offering money in exchange for their secret, but invariably with the same result.

“If we die not from the bite of the serpents,” they would say, with an appearance of imperturbable faith, “it is owing to the protection of Sidna-Aïsser.”

Superstition alone can satisfy the Arab for this curious fact of the snake-charmers. To me who am not given to the supernatural, it seems that these men must possess a knowledge of certain herbs, the juice of which neutralizes the effects of the venom; and that they hold this remedy in their mouths while sucking the wound, thus obtaining results usually produced by excision and cauterization. This suggestion I give for what it is worth.

The sun was now high in heaven, and it was time to seek shelter from his piercing rays. We took the road to our tents, on approaching which I heard the well-known voice of the muezzin calling upon us to make the Salat-el-Dohor, or second morning prayer.

Having made my ablutions, I drank a bowlful of *yohourte* (curdled milk), smoked a delicious chiboque, and stretched myself upon my cushions, where I enjoyed a refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SLAVE-HUNT.

It was about three o'clock—the usual hour for rising from the siesta—when Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni entered my tent. I could never get rid of him now; for, so taken up was he with thinking of the danger by which I was threatened, that I believe he would have fastened himself to me with a strap, if he could.

I am confident that he had given up sleep, and that he started up at the least noise, like an anxious mother watching over her child. There was something ludicrous in his vigilance that sometimes made me laugh in spite of myself. He reminded me of a character in some play, who enjoyed an annuity upon the life of another person, and was in a

constant state of anxiety lest that individual should catch cold, or get a headache, or the least circumstance occur to endanger his health in any way.

"How are you going to employ yourself for the rest of the day?" inquired the réis, addressing me.

"In smoking and repose until after the evening prayer," replied I, "after which I must visit the Nagib, who has sent word to me, by Selim, that he expects me."

"Well, then," rejoined he, "if you would like to take coffee in my tent in the meantime, you will meet a *djellab* (slave merchant) there, with whom I have some business to transact. You are traveling to observe and to learn. This *djellab* is one who has traveled much, and who will be able to tell you many things you do not yet know."

I accompanied the réis to his tent, soon after which the *djellab* made his appearance.

As soon as they had finished the business about which they were engaged, I addressed myself to the dealer in human flesh, who, if he told me some things that I knew already, certainly related others that were new to me, and of which, he assured me, he had been an eye-witness. Many of the statements which I had from him seeming to be worth preserving, I will here relate the substance of what he told me—giving, besides, such other information respecting the negro race as I can furnish.

Like every other description of merchandise, slaves are sold, in these countries, at public auction. They are divided into classes, and bring, in general, the following prices:

A negro with a beard, from two to three hundred francs.

A negro youth, or *amrat*, from four hundred to four hundred and fifty francs.

A negro boy, from two hundred to two hundred and twenty francs.

An Abyssinian, from fifteen hundred to two thousand five hundred francs.

A negress from eighteen to twenty-five years old, from two hundred to two hundred and twenty-five francs.

One from thirteen to eighteen years old, from three hundred to three hundred and fifty francs.

One from eleven to thirteen years old, from four hundred and fifty to five hundred francs.

A negro nurse, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty francs.

A small negro girl, from one hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty francs.

The dealer gives every facility to the purchaser for the examination of the slaves, three days being also allowed him for the detection of unsoundness or vice; within which time he is at liberty to return such of them as are subject to disease of the eyes; those who have sharp-pointed teeth, denoting, as in the case of the Niam-Niams, that they are cannibals; those who cut themselves with their fetters on the march; negresses who snore, and all who are afflicted with the *ark-el-ensil*. The latter disease begins with a pimple on the neck, legs, or arms, projecting a sort of thin filament—the Macaco, or Guinea worm—which must be withdrawn with great care, and wound up, as it comes out, upon little sticks, like threads upon a reel. Should it break during this operation, the patient dies, or the disease, at least, becomes incurable. These filaments are sometimes from sixty to seventy yards long.

All the slaves sold in these countries are brought from the interior and coast of Africa, from whence they are sent, closely packed, into Egypt, Syria, Arabia and Turkey. These imported Africans, however, are not invariably brought in as merchandise, for numbers of free negroes are to be found dispersed all over the East.

At Djeddo, as well as at Mecca, the negroes form a corporation, to which the same privileges are accorded as those enjoyed by the several corporations of Turks and Arabs: nay, more than this, the Mussulmans have no scruples about

acknowledging as their chief, or *cadî*, or their superior in any respect, a man with black skin and woolly head.

The result of granting these privileges and rights of citizenship to the negroes of the East is, that they hold there a position very different from that of the blacks in America, who are looked upon as entirely distinct and separate from the whites, by whom they have usually been held in bondage. In the East, on the contrary, the negro is not necessarily, or originally, a slave,—the quality of slave is not held to be inseparable from the quality of negro. Among the Mussulmans, and by the Arabs especially, the negro is treated rather like one of the family than as a slave. He frequently becomes the confidential friend of his master; and, in case of ill treatment, he can claim the privilege of being sold again,—a demand to which his master is obliged to accede.

“Clothe thy slaves with thine own vestments, and feed them with thine own food,” says the Koran—“but if thou art not able to maintain them, sell them.”

In accordance with these teachings, the legislators have taken care to govern, by equitable laws, all that concerns the slaves, and to secure them proper protection, so that neither the malice, the avarice, the vice, nor even the poverty of their masters can injuriously affect them. The forms of sale and purchase are in general well defined; their marriages and divorces are controlled by law, and they enjoy numerous modes of obtaining their freedom.

In France, we often hear—“he works like a negro”—or—“miserable as a negro:” for there they know but the negro of the colonies, the man degraded by a slavery the most cruel, severe and humiliating. Far different, let me say, is the condition of the negroes of the East, whose masters, be they Turks or be they Arabs, are humane—nay, paternal towards them: while the American slave-holders, who, nevertheless, belong to a nation professing to be free,

democratic and civilized, are filled with pride, aristocratic haughtiness and inhumanity.

For some time past, the slave trade has much diminished. Whether this is for good, or whether for evil, my readers may perhaps be enabled to judge from the following facts.

Suppose a man inhabiting a dilapidated dwelling, through the crevices in the walls of which the wind whistles, the rain rattling through the holes in the roof, the house uninhabitable. You hasten to destroy this hovel, to raze it to the ground—but you provide no other asylum for him who dwelt within it.

What then? Why, the poor wretch whose hut you have destroyed, who had, at least, a bit of wall to screen him from the wind, a bit of roof to shelter him from the rain, now lies exposed to all the blasts of heaven, lamenting, miserable as he was before, over what you have deprived him of.

And so it is with the hapless negro. The slave trade has diminished, and what is the result?

In Senegal, when the trade flourished, the Kings used to fatten up their subjects, and treat them with tender care; whereas now, not knowing what to do with them, half the time they cut their windpipes or let them die of hunger.

In Bournou, indeed, they are somewhat better treated. There they neither cut their windpipes nor let them perish of hunger. They hunt them down out of sheer pity, in order to convert them to Mohammedanism; just as the Spaniards ran down the Mexicans to make Christians of them.

Sackatoo is usually the point from which the hunt takes its departure. The *goums* of the Sultan, cavalry and infantry, penetrate from thence into the country, in disciplined order, to take the negroes unawares, having natives of those parts for guides—so true is it that men are oftenest betrayed by their friends!

These guides are, for the most part, shepherds, or traders in the skins of animals. Wandering freely through the

country, safe in their peaceable occupations, going to and from the chief towns without awakening any suspicion, nothing is easier than for them to act as spies, and to lay snares for the wretched natives. They take note of the population of each village, the number of armed men belonging to it, and the ages of the different members of the community; which done, they carry their information to the Sultan, engaging, for a specified sum, to guide his *goums*, with whom they are to be hostages for the truth of their assertions.

Then the expedition sets forth, guided by these men. For the first stages of their march they push forward by day, encamping at night; but, when within two days' journey of the place decided upon for an attack, they remain in bivouac until night-fall, when they again push on until day-light.

When the night for the attack arrives, the *goums* advance, moving forward in breathless silence. They have so well calculated their distance, that they arrive at the place to be attacked before day-break, and without risk of being betrayed. The cavalry, taking the lead at a gallop, now turn the flank of the village, forming in a crescent upon one side of it, while the infantry, by a concerted movement, blockade the other. So soundly are the inhabitants sleeping, in fancied security, that they seldom wake up in time to make good their escape; nor does it often happen that they have already done so, from having received timely warning.

But now they are all awake, all in movement. Flying in every direction, they conceal themselves behind the thickets that surround the village, the women carrying their children in their arms and on their backs, while they drag after them the old and the sick; the whole scene looking like an ant-hill that has been disturbed.

Now the attack commences, the object of the troops being to make prisoners of the whole community, man, woman and child, killing as few as possible—for the Sultan is a humane man, and likes to have them all alive. Several

platoons are first marched to the assault, their movement being sustained by the whole line, which keeps up a din by firing blank cartridge and swivel guns loaded with powder only. All take to flight, now, as the soldiers advance. Panic has taken full possession, when, suddenly, the fugitives turn—for the marauder is near the cave where the lion has bidden his whelps. Ordinarily these negroes dwell in huts or cabins; but, to secure themselves from their enemies, they dig holes in the ground—regular earths, in fact—at the bottom of which they conceal that which they hold most precious, their wives and children; and it is to defend this treasure that they now pluck up courage.

With one hand they dart their long, poison-tipped javelins, holding their bucklers before them with the other; but the bullets find them long before their enemies are within reach of those uncertain weapons. So enduring are they of pain, however, besides being ignorant of this instrument of destruction so new to them, that they are often pierced with four or five bullets before they fall. Taking up a handful of earth they will rub the bullet-wound with it, thinking that the skin has merely been chafed off, fighting on until they fall dead from sheer loss of blood.

While the head of a family is fighting, his wife and children encourage him with their cries, and even assist him by attacking the enemy with stones; but when he falls they give themselves up without a murmur, as if it were hopeless to contend any longer against destiny.

Others fly with their families and take refuge in their burrows; and here the skill of the hunter is displayed in the methods by which he unearths them; some smoking them out as we do badgers and foxes; others firing a gun charged with red pepper into the burrow, which half suffocates the negroes, and compels them to rush blindly out, when they are at once seized and fettered.

If the explosion fails of bringing any of the fugitives out, the hunters proceed to another burrow, for they know what

has happened in that one. The mother has suffocated her children, the father has killed her, and then himself.

As the prisoners are dragged away, the attachment to soil and to family, so strong among the negro races, is strikingly manifested by them. Some, grasping their feet with their hands, refuse to rise. Others, bracing themselves against trees, resist with all the force of their muscles; or, entwining themselves with their wives and children, form knots which nothing short of the sword can untie.

But the soldiers have ways and means of rendering all such resistance useless; for they have anticipated the stratagems and obstinacy to which the love of country has driven their victims. Those who are hardest to deal with are yoked by the legs to horses, and thus dragged away from their village through the brambles and over the rocks. Half flayed, bloody, and disfigured from this treatment, and sometimes with their limbs broken, it yet happens that some of them will not yield, in which case they are shot, there being no further use for them.

Five or six of the prisoners are fastened to one chain, the neck of each being attached to it by a strong iron ring, fastened with a padlock, and their hands fastened behind with palm-leaf cords.

And so ends the slave-hunt.

But now a marked change takes place in the conduct of the captors. To carnage, fire, wounds, and all manner of savage barbarities succeed the most tender care and a compassion that is quite touching. If an aged man is so enfeebled that he walks with difficulty, they place him upon a litter or upon a camel, reviving him with some cordial or refreshing drink. Time is given to the women to supply nourishment to their infants; the wounded are assisted in staunching their wounds, and provisions in abundance are dealt out to all. These are but the tender mercies of the butcher, however—the delicate attentions of the torture-master; for the captors are bound to carry their victims to

the capital alive. But humanity has its limits, extending, in this case, precisely from the ravaged village to the city of Sackatoo—fifteen or twenty days' respite from the misery of a lifetime.

The return of the hunt is announced in the capital by musicians playing upon the *fanfany*, the *moulou*, the *karâaz*, and the *gouguy*, while others beat upon the *gangâa* and the *tassa-namouny*, or *darbouka*.

The *fanfany* is a buffalo horn, from which the player produces a deep, monotonous sound.

The *moulou* is a sort of violin, made of wood, and having two gut strings, which, on being twanged with the finger and thumb, give sounds like the cooing of pigeons.

The *karâaz*, of which I have already spoken, is a kind of flute made of a reed, having six holes in the upper side and one in the lower.

The *gouguy* is somewhat like the *moulou* in form, but has only one string, which is made of hair, and scraped by the player with a bow strung with the same material.

The *gangâa* is a drum, one end of which is beaten with the hand and the other with a curved stick.

The *tassa-namouny*, or *darbouka*, already alluded to, is a long tube of earth, expanding at one end, the larger aperture of which is covered with goat-skin, on which the player beats time with the fingers.

These instruments are all to be found in use throughout the countries of Mareb and Hadramaut.

When the music strikes up the Sultan goes forth from his palace, followed by his *oukil*, or vizier, and a grand retinue. Approaching his troops, he congratulates the officers and examines the prisoners. The latter are then huddled together in pens, those among them who submit to the rite of circumcision and the teachings of mohammedanism being set at liberty, while those who refuse to abandon fetichism are sold into slavery—mother separated from child, husband from wife, families broken up and dissolved.

And what have these people gained by renouncing their faith—their fetichism?

Ask the question of any slave-dealer of that country, and he will tell you the same sad story recounted by me in my "Pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina," and which I here reproduce.

"These Tacrouris or black Mussulmans, come from beyond Darfour, from Baghermy or from Bournou; from regions of impoverished soil, the produce of which is insufficient for the subsistence of the whole population. In fact, were it not for their periodical emigrations, their country must eventually be depopulated by long famine. The government, therefore, to get rid of the surplus population, sends away thousands of them, annually, on the pretext of enabling them to accomplish that pilgrimage to Mecca which every good Mussulman is supposed to make at least once in his life.

"The poor wretches have from five to six hundred leagues to traverse through Darfour and Kordofan, one hundred leagues of this, at least, being through frightful deserts. They travel in troops, and on foot; living on provisions carried by them suspended at the ends of sticks balanced on the shoulders, and on water brought in goat-skin bottles.

"Some of them, however, take no provision of water, on account of its weight and the fatigue to be endured in carrying it. They time their departure to the period of the heavy rains, praying to Allah to store up this liquid manna for them in the hollows of the rocks.

"One third of these pilgrims fall by the wayside, before reaching Arabia. The survivors pursue their course; subsisting by the sale of amulets, love-philters, and drugs of their country—those among them who can write trading also in a kind of talismans, made of parchment, inscribed with verses of the Koran.

"These black emigrations look like caravans of giant ants. From Kordofan they bend their steps to Dongolah

or to Cartoum, whence they traverse Abyssinia to Arkiko, or cross the desert of the Becharris to Souakem—obtaining free passage in ships to Djedda, as soon as they reach the sea coast. They do not leave their country all at the same time, for so large a band would soon exhaust the waters of the countries through which they have to pass, and three fourths of them would perish of thirst—against which contingency they provide by traveling in small troops of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred each. When women accompany a troop they carry calabashes.

“It is an evil day for the inhabitants of the villages along the route, unless they flee at the approach of the Tacrouris, who lead them away as prisoners, making them carry a portion of their baggage, under which they are often forced to stagger along until they drop down dead of fatigue.

“The pilgrimage accomplished, some of them—very few, however—have the hardihood to take to the road again and return to their homes. The greater number dreading again to encounter the hardships already experienced by them, disperse themselves through Hedjaz, around Djedda and Mecca, where they establish themselves in hovels, or rather kennels, in which the most unclean beasts of our towns, or the wild ones of our forests, would hardly like to take shelter.”

All this, nevertheless—nay, even bondage in the land of the Mussulman—is preferable to the miserable existence dragged out by these poor people in their own country, as followers of Mahomet the Prophet.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JUSTICE OF THE NAGIB.

AFTER the evening prayer, I took my way to the Tower, calling, by the way, on Seïd-Ahmed, with whom, in our late ramble, I had arranged for an early meeting.

"Sidi," said I, addressing him, "I was going to avail myself, this evening, of your invitation to visit you whenever convenient to me; but Seïd-Abd'el-Rahman having sent word that he expects me after the evening prayer, I call to say that I must defer that pleasure until another time."

"It so happens," rejoined Seïd-Ahmed, "that I, too, am going to the Tower; for to-night the Nagib sits there in judgment."

"What!" exclaimed I, "have I yet another ordeal to go through?"

"Not so," replied my friend; "but every second night, after the last prayer, the Nagib dispenses justice to the Marebeys, and this is an evening for the session of a *mes-houar*" (tribunal).

Reassured by the words of the taleb—for a momentary anticipation of the questionable entertainments through which I had been put two days before had flashed upon me—I proceeded with him to the Tower, where we found the Nagib seated upon his cushions, at the door of the vestibule. There, surrounded by his chiefs and a crowd of retainers, he rendered important decisions while smoking his chicha.

The audience was a large one—for Seïd-Abd'el-Rahman was very popular with his people, owing, in great measure, to his accessibility to all. Mussulman, Sabian, or Jew, provided only he was of the country, enjoyed the privilege of access to him at all times to state his case, on which the

Nagib at once rendered justice by a decree based upon equity as well as common sense.

Seïd-Ahmed took the place reserved for him among the members of the tribunal, while for myself, after the interchange of the usual compliments, the Nagib ordered a chibouque to be brought, which he lighted and presented to me with his own hands.

Curious to witness an example of the justice of the country, I took up the most convenient position for seeing and hearing, as the audience commenced.

There were women who complained of ill-treatment on the part of their husbands ; men who accused their wives of frailty, or of sterility ; divisions of inheritance to adjust ; thefts and frauds to punish ; among all which cases there were two particularly remarkable for the judgments rendered upon them.

The first of these two cases was one between a *katib* and a *fellah*—that is, a writer and a peasant—the wife of the latter having been taken away from him by the former, who maintained that he had a claim upon her.

The woman declined to acknowledge either the one or the other of them as her husband, or, rather, she acknowledged them both—a view of the case which rendered it decidedly embarrassing.

Having heard both sides, and reflected a moment, the Nagib said, addressing the claimants, “Leave this woman here, and return in half an hour,” on which the *katib* and *fellah* made their salutations and retired.

The second case was one between a *fekaï* and a *zibdaï*, or, in other words, a fruiterer and a butter-merchant—the latter very much besmeared with butter ; the former clean.

The fruiterer said, “I had been to buy some butter from this man, and drew out my purse, full of money, to pay for the butter he had put in my *goulla*, when, tempted by the sight of the coins, he seized me by the wrist. I cried

‘thief!’ but he would not let me go; and thus have we come before you—I squeezing my money in my hand, and he grasping my wrist with his. And now, by Mohammed, our great Prophet, I swear that this man lies in saying that I have stolen his money, for that money is truly mine.”

The butter-merchant said, “This man came to buy a *goulla* of butter from me, and when I had filled it he said, ‘Hast thou change of an *abû-mathfa* (Spanish piaster)?’ I searched my pocket, from which I drew out my hand full of money, which I placed upon the sill of my shop, from which he snatched it, and was going off with my butter and my money, when I seized him by the wrist and cried ‘thief!’ but, in spite of my cries, he refused to return my property to me, and I have brought him hither, in order that you may judge between us. And now, by Mohammed, our great Prophet, I swear that this man lies in saying that I have stolen his money, for that money is truly mine.”

The Nagib caused the complainants to repeat their charges twice, but neither of them varied from his first statement. Then said he, after a moment’s reflection, “Leave this money here, and return in half an hour,” on which the fruiterer, who had all along kept his hold of the money, deposited it in a wooden bowl, brought by one of the guard—and both complainants, having made their salutations, retired.

When they were gone, the Nagib quitted his seat at the door of the vestibule, and went up into the fourth story of the tower, taking with him the woman and money in dispute. At the appointed moment he returned with them, and went back calmly to his seat. The parties interested were all present, and the katib and fellah were called up.

“Here,” said the Nagib, addressing the katib, “take thy wife and lead her away, for she is thine truly.”

Then, turning to his guards and pointing to the fellah, he said, “Give this man fifty blows of a courbash on the soles of his feet.

The katib walked off with his wife, and the guards gave the fellah fifty blows of a courbash on the soles of his feet.

Next came the fruiterer and the butter-merchant, in their turn.

"Here," said the Nagib to the fruiterer, "here is thy money; verily didst thou take it from thine own purse, and never did it belong to him by whom thou art accused."

Then, turning to his guards and pointing to the butter-merchant, he said, "Give this man fifty blows of a courbash on the soles of his feet."

The fruiterer walked off with his money, and the guards gave the butter merchant fifty blows of a courbash on the soles of his feet.

When the court had risen, I asked the Nagib how he ascertained that the woman was the wife of the katib, and the money the property of the fruiterer.

"Nothing more simple," replied he. "You saw how I went up into the fourth story with the woman and the money. Well, when we arrived there, I ordered her suddenly to clean my inkhorn, when, like one accustomed to that work, she at once took it, drew out the cotton from it, washed it properly, replaced it on the stand, and filled it with fresh ink. Then said I to myself, 'If you were the wife of the fellah, you never could have cleaned an inkhorn like that; you must be the wife of the katib.'"

"Good!" said I, bowing in token of assent. "So much for the woman. And how about the money?"

"The money was quite another business," replied the Nagib, smiling with a self-satisfied expression, as he leered at me with a look full of artfulness and craft. "You must have remarked how buttery the butter-merchant was, and how greasy his hands were in particular. Well, I put the money into a vessel of hot water, and upon examining the water carefully I could not find that a single particle of

grease had come to the surface. Then said I to myself, 'This money belongs the fruiterer, and not to the butter-merchant; for, had it belonged to the latter, it must have been greasy, and the grease would have shown on the surface of the water.' "

At this I bowed very low, indeed, and said: "In good faith I doubt whether the great King Solomon himself could have rendered a decision with more sagacity and wisdom."

Until then I had always looked upon the tales related to us in the "Arabian Nights" as mere fictions; but on witnessing the delivery of these two judgments, I felt convinced that some of them, at least, were founded on facts. Of course they are worked up into romances, but they have a basis of reality.

"I thank you for your visit," said the Nagib, when the crowd had departed. "I asked you to come at this hour because I want to have some conversation with you in private."

On hearing this the chiefs retired. Coffee was brought by negro slaves, who refilled the Nagib's chicha and my chibouque, and then left us.

"You possess the art of curing maladies—of prolonging life," said the Nagib, addressing me when we were alone.

"Who could have told you that?" inquired I.

"I know that Europeans are singularly versed in such knowledge," rejoined he. "Doubtless you carry with you balms, ointments, potions, and specifics for the restoration of health, life, vigor?"

"Among my baggage I have what we call a medicine chest," replied I—"a small one, but it contains a good many drugs."

"Will you let me see it?"

"Willingly" said I; and calling Selim, who had followed me, I desired him to run and fetch the box.

"Is not that the same servant by whom you sent your presents?" inquired the Nagib.

"The very same, O Sidi!" replied I.

"And you can depend upon him?"

"As surely as upon myself."

"And upon your other servant?"

"Just the same."

"Then why are you always attended by this one?"

"Simply because he has been longer in my service than the other, and is accustomed to my habits."

"How long has he been with you?"

"Five years?"

"And the other?"

"Only two."

"What is the name of the latter?"

"Mohammed."

"Where does he come from?"

"From Mecca."

"And Selim?"

"From Cairo."

"Hadji, say what you will, one can never be so sure of another man as of himself. I had rather you would bring me the medicine chest yourself."

"And why so?"

"Because I do not want people to know that I have consulted you, and your servant may tell."

"Selim now arrived with the box, which he handed to me, and retired. I opened it. The Nagib gazed into it with eager eyes.

"What do you wish for?" asked I.

"I know not," replied he; "but let me see whether the box contains any thing that may be of service to me;" and he began rummaging in it inquisitively, examining every vial, gallipot, and unguent, and asking what they were good to cure, which I told him as far as I knew.

"Ah!" exclaimed he, in a tone of disappointment, after

he had examined them all, "I see, by your answers to my questions, that you have not got what I hoped to find."

"But," said I, "some of these medicines are applicable to a variety of cases. I have mentioned to you those only in which they are most commonly employed."

"Look," rejoined he, "is there nothing among these drugs that can awaken the slumbering senses, rekindle the extinct fires?"

I understood him now. He asked for what these Orientals are ever seeking, and ever will seek—for what I could never give him, unless among my vials I happened to have had some filled from the Fountain of Youth.

In default of this, I gave what to him might appear an equivalent—some extract of cantharides, in powder, to the amount of eight or ten grains, warning him against taking it except in very small doses; and I left him in ecstasies at the result of my visit.

I went to rejoin the encampment without any other companion than my inevitable Selim, but on reaching the gate of the tower I found two guards waiting there with orders to escort me.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STORM OF LOCUSTS.—ATTACK BY NIGHT.—MUSSULMAN OBSEQUIES.

As we went quietly through the streets the two soldiers by whom I was escorted raised a sudden cry, exclaiming, "Allah! Allah! turn away from us this plague by which we are threatened, and direct it toward the land of the unbelievers!"

"Wherefore this cry?" asked I of those who uttered it.

"Turn your eyes toward the east," said one.

I looked in that direction and perceived that the horizon was wrapped in gloom, the stars appearing as if obscured by a veil; on asking my attendants the cause of which, they said: "Do you not see the locusts coming? Allah protect us!" I had previously seen a similar phenomenon at Cairo, Suez, Djedda, Mecca, and Abu-Arisch, and knew that they were right. They continued to utter cries of lamentation, knocking at the doors of the houses as they passed, to notify the occupants of the inauspicious visitants, in order that they might come forth and exorcise them.

Now a drowsy tumult began to vibrate in my ears, increasing in loudness until it broke out into a deafening noise. In every direction the Marebeys were to be seen issuing from their dwellings, armed with all such utensils of iron and of copper as they could lay their hands on—such an array of pots and pans and kettles, that one might have supposed the whole community out for the purpose of cooking in the open air.

I suppose my French temperament must have got the better of me about this time, for, in spite of the threatened calamity, it was with great difficulty that I could refrain from laughing at the scene before me, although the faintest smile, if detected, would probably have led to my being stoned upon the spot.

Men, women, and children now began to beat upon their pots and pans with all their might, uttering piercing shrieks in accompaniment, and crying at intervals, with astounding loudness, "*Haddid! Haddid!*" (iron! iron!) In spite of this fearful din, however, the locusts kept steadily advancing. The black veil by which the east was obscured kept enlarging and spreading out until it came over our heads; the air became thick and murky; the sky disappeared from our gaze as if a great sheet had been spread out above us, with holes in it here and there, through which a few stars were visible.

Then I felt a pelting as if of elastic hailstones which

rebounded from me, and in a few moments the earth was thickly covered with a dense layer of the insects. Fortunately, the easterly wind on which they came now ceased to blow, a gale from the north beginning to whistle wildly up, carrying the plague away with it toward the tribes encamped to the south of us.

Once upon the ground the locusts commenced devouring every thing they could feed upon—but as their fall was of short duration, the devastation committed by them was not very great, and the people were comforted.

“The grace of the Prophet and the power of the word *haddid* saved us this time,” said my guards; “instead of being an evil, in fact, this visitation will be a gain to us, for the locust is as useful when dead as he is destructive when alive. He eats up our crops now and then; well, we eat *him* in our turn.”

We had now arrived at the lines of our encampment. I gave some pieces of money to the soldiers and they left me.

The scene was a striking one as I advanced into the camp. Each tent was lighted up to an unusual extent, while every member of the caravan, armed with a torch and having a bag slung round his body, was occupied in catching locusts. Satisfaction beamed on every face, so that one might have supposed these good people were picking up gold—for the Arabs are remarkably fond of locusts, which they dress in several ways.

Some boil or broil them, having first cut off their feet, legs, and heads. Others dry them in the sun and grind them to powder, which they mix with milk or knead up with flour, seasoning with butter and salt the paste thus made. But it is not the Arabs themselves only who love this curious manna, for the apes, camels, oxen, and poultry all do equal honor to it. The camels, in particular, devour it greedily. It is dried or cooked for them by being heaped up in a large hole between two layers of burning charcoal.

Late as the hour was, every tent was smoking with impromptu preparations for cooking these insects, which, however, the Mussulmans are forbidden to eat unless taken alive.

The Marebeys describe the locust as having the head of the horse, the eyes of the elephant, the neck of the bull, the horns of the antelope, the chest of the lion, the wings of the eagle, the thighs of the camel, the feet of the ostrich, the belly of the scorpion, and the body of the serpent.

They recognize four species of this insect;—the great, the small, the gray, and the yellow locust.

Those which spread themselves over Arabia come from the shores of the Persian Gulf. Lahsa and Nedjid suffer particularly from their ravages. In these districts they sometimes appear in such immense quantities, that when they have devoured all the crops, they invade by thousands the houses of the inhabitants, where they eat every thing they can find, to the very leather of the water-bottles.

These mighty columns of locusts are usually under the conduct of a chief, called by the Arabs the *Sultan of the locusts*. This chief is a large individual, of a blue color striped with green, white and red. His eyes are like pearls, and his head is decorated with a sort of tuft; while from each wing there depends an epaulet of golden fringe, so that he is easily recognized. He is surrounded by his retainers, like the queen bee, and attended by a staff not quite so gorgeously arrayed as himself, but, nevertheless, sufficiently distinguishable from the rest of the immense phalanx. An advanced guard precedes him by one day, on the appearance of which the people look out for a storm of locusts.

Beside using the locust as food, the Marebeys employ it as a medicine. To cure dropsy, for example, they take a dozen of these insects, cut off their heads and wings, season them with leaves of the common myrtle, and having boiled

down the mixture in a pint of water, drink the decoction. Persons attacked with the *homra*, or pimple of Aleppo, also are supposed to derive great benefit from carrying about them a locust of the long-necked variety.

To dream that you are eating locusts is looked upon as a good omen.

If you dream that you are gathering them into a vessel, you are going to make a great deal of money.

If you dream that they are raining down and are of gold, Allah is about to restore to you something that you have lost.

But if you should dream that they are devouring the crops, you are sure to encounter ill-disposed people the next day or night—thieves, probably.

While some were gathering in the locusts, and the greedy ones were already feasting upon them, I, an epicure of the European schools, disposed myself to rest, preferring the comfort of a good sleep to any mess made of locusts. What I dreamed of I know not; but I was awakened between two and three in the morning by a disturbance that seemed to be going on at no great distance; when, on looking out, I saw a crowd of people near the tent of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni. In the midst of the group stood the *réis*, having three prisoners with him, one of whom lay on the ground, weltering in blood.

It appeared that, in the dead of the night, the *réis* had detected three men creeping on their bellies towards his tent. He gave no alarm, but made his way towards them so stealthily and adroitly that they neither saw nor heard him, being fully occupied in pursuing their difficult course, and confident, probably, that the darkness would shield them from surprise. Sabre in mouth, and worming himself along in the same manner as they did, the *réis* soon got them between himself and his tent, when he sprang suddenly to his feet, with a loud shout, on which the robbers attempted to save themselves by flight. At this moment,

however, one of them fell heavily to the ground, hamstrung by a slashing cut of the sword, delivered by the réis in the manner practiced by the Marebeys and Hadramites.

Alarmed by the shout of the réis, the chaousses and chouafs now ran toward him, and soon came up with the two fugitives, who proved to be shepherds of Harib, pasturing the flocks of their masters at a distance of some leagues from the camp, and who, come to replenish their water-bottles in the Dona, were tempted by the tranquility of the camp to steal into it for the purpose of plunder.

We were puzzled what to do with our prisoners, but at length we decided to give them a good taste of the bastinado, and let them go; a sentence which was carried into effect without crippling them.

The wounded man was carried into a tent, where he soon died. His wound was frightful to look at: flesh, muscles and nerves were cut clean through as if with a heavy and very sharp ax. The body was washed, wrapped in a shroud, and carried at day-break to some distance from the encampment, where they buried it at the foot of a mimosa: for, caught *in flagrante delictu*, the robber had no claim to be buried in holy ground.

His clothes and equipments became the property of the *mordishour* of Mareb. Mordishour means *a washer of corpses*. It is a patent office, none but the holder of which, or his assistants, can legally perform the duties; except in traveling, when the friends of the deceased, or any benevolent person willing to undertake the last offices, are permitted to do so.

There are mordishours in all towns of the East. In Persia they are appointed by authority, so as to secure official returns of deaths and of the diseases by which they were caused.

When a person dies it is reported to the *cadi*, who says to the messenger, "Health be upon *thy* head," giving him

at the same time an *adzen*, or permit to wash the body, which is furnished gratis to poor people, the rich being obliged to pay in proportion to their means. With the *adzen* he seeks the mordishour, who goes, or sends some of his people, to wash the body, the washers being male or female, according to the sex of the deceased. The clothes taken from the body become the property of the washer—for, from the moment a person dies, no one else dare touch corpse or garment, both being considered unclean.

The rich, in general, have their dead washed at their own houses with tepid water and perfumed soap. For poor people cold water alone is used. Among the former, the eyes, nostrils, mouth and ears of the corpse are stuffed with camphor and cotton, after which it is wrapped in a shroud of white flannel, cotton cloth, or cambric, perfumed with benzoin and other aromatic drugs, and inscribed, in most cases, with some passages from the Koran. The body, when thus attired, is laid out in some lonely chamber.

If the corpse is to be embalmed, they put it in a coffin of rough boards, filling up the spaces with salt, lime, and spices. This process, however, is only resorted to in the case of chief officers of the state, marabouts, and other persons of importance.

The funerals are conducted with little or no ceremony. The body, placed upon a bier, and covered with a common cloth, if that of a poor person, with a white cashmere among the rich, and with a green cashmere if belonging to the family of a cheriff, is thus borne to the cemetery, the followers repeating all the way, in a slow, measured tone, the words "Allah! Allah! Allah!" There are no undertakers here for the arrangement of funeral processions, that duty being performed by the relatives and servants of the deceased.

It is customary for any person meeting a funeral procession to diverge from his course, and take hold of a corner of the bier, walking with it until another passer-by takes

his place—the Mussulman usage exacting that each person must lend his services in this way for at least ten paces. I have many a time dismounted on thus meeting a funeral *cortège*, to take my place in it according to this custom.

At a woman's funeral, the *tcherchadour*—which means *the four veils*—is elevated above the corpse. It is a kind of pall, borne upon four poles.

Interments are not permitted within the mosques; for, even after the bodies have been purified, they are still supposed to defile whoever happens to touch them, or the place where they are laid. The cemeteries of the smaller towns and villages are outside the walls, near the principal roads, as among the ancient Romans. In the large cities, however, there are many burial places, especially in districts where the air is dry.

In burying a man of rank, or a warrior, they lay the turban of the one and the weapons of the other by his side. Cheriffs, or descendants of the Prophet, are interred like others, in their shrouds only; but as the distinction between a rich man and a poor descends with him even to the tomb, earth is not cast upon them, their remains being built over with stone, marble, or brick, and a pillar placed at each end of the grave—the one at the head indicating the sex of the dead, according as it is decorated with a turban or a veil.

The grave is not allowed to be more than four feet high. It is covered with a slab, inscribed with passages from the life of the deceased, or from the Koran.

It is usual among Mussulmans of the better classes, to bury their dead near the remains of some holy personage or marabout of distinction, in which case they put them in coffins, as they often have to be carried to a distance of two or three hundred leagues. When the procession arrives at a town or village, it moves by them instead of passing through; for, as they say in Arabia:

“The dead pass out, but they must not come in.”

CHAPTER XV.

VISIT TO THE SICK.—CONVERSATION WITH SEID-AHMED.

WHEN I had witnessed the burial of the robber, I went to visit our sick, most of whom, as I expected, were nearly, if not quite restored by care and repose, exhibiting no further marks of the venom than a deep red flush about the locality of the bite.

I had still the wife of Hamza to visit, however. This woman, whose name was Aeïscha, I expected to find in a hopeless condition. On arriving near the tent of her husband, that fanatic came forth to meet me, casting himself at my feet and kissing the border of my abbaye—a sudden change in his manners at which I was so surprised that I shrank back involuntarily, suspecting that he had taken that position to attack me unawares with his cimeter. But he again stood up, and assuming an attitude of deep humiliation, with his hands crossed upon his breast, said :

“My lips are unworthy to touch thy garments.”

To which I responded :

“When their hearts are pure, all the servants of Allah are equal before him.”

This manner of speaking in maxims I often adopted, because, when judiciously practiced, it has a great effect upon the minds of the Arabs, the most unlearned of whom even employ it in their recitals, as well as in ordinary conversation.

We entered the tent, where I was much surprised to find the patient in a far better state than I could have expected, even under the most favorable circumstances. The poultices and lotions had quite subdued all inflammation, and so far reduced the swelling that the limb had nearly resumed its natural form.

I took care not to express any surprise, merely saying to Hamza, "Suppose you had killed me?"

"If I had killed you," said he, "this houri must have died and gone to paradise, and I should have been alone in the world, and miserable, like one accursed;" and as he spoke he raised the veil which concealed her features.

I beheld a pair of magnificent eyes, beaming upon me with an expression of gratitude; a sweet mouth, smiling thanks. The face was one of the purest and most harmonious beauty—of dazzling beauty, indeed, although the traces of suffering still lingered upon it.

"Hadji," said Hamza, addressing me, "I know not how to acknowledge your goodness to me. Ask of me whatever it is in my power to give, and I will give it; instruct me what it is in power to do for you, and I will do it; in proof of which I here unveil to you the face of Aëïscha."

"Banish from your heart all feeling of hate towards me," said I; "I ask for nothing more."

"You have saved her life," continued he, "and from this hour mine is in your hands as surely as it was when my pistol bullets hardly marked where they hit you. Be you man, or be you sorcerer, it matters not; for you have surely been sent among us by Allah. Doubtless, you have destroyed the dragon of Kassr-el-Cheïtan. Surely he who has cured us of the bites of serpents will preserve us, by his presence, from the evil eye, and from the snares of unclean spirits. From this moment I swear to obey your commands;" and so saying, he cut a lock from his beard, and gave it to me, inclosed in a little bag of leather.

When any Mussulman swears by his beard, you may believe him. If an Arab gives you but a single hair from it, it is a token that he has disposed of himself to you in full.

I grasped the hand of Hamza as I took leave of him—for, whatever the reason, I was not sorry to find his sentiments with regard to me so much changed. In fact his djembie

had been for some time a sword of Damocles over my head, sometimes occupying my fancy more than I liked.

Having visited all our sick, I went to see Seïd-Ahmed. The usual compliments having been exchanged, coffee served, and chicha and chiboque lighted, he asked me whether I still persisted in my determination to push on with the caravan.

"Undoubtedly," replied I. "Are not the gates of Mareb open to me since I have passed through the ordeal?"

The taleb shook his head.

"So long as they can make use of you," said he, "you have nothing to fear. Harken to what I say: In this part of Arabia there are worse dangers than those of the desert. Like you, I am a stranger in this country of Mareb, to which I came from Muscat, of which I am a native, and where, as taleb, I was honored with the friendship of the Imaum. Jealousies grew out of this; and the slanders of court intrigue brought me into such disfavor with him that I was obliged to fly. I will not recount my adventures in seeking an asylum where I might pass tranquilly the rest of my days. Every where the effects of my misfortune followed me; and hardly had I established myself in a place than I was obliged to leave it.

"At length a combination of circumstances brought me hither. Whether the rumors of my disgrace had found their way here, or not, it appears that my reputation as a taleb was not unknown, for soon after my arrival at Mareb the Nagib sent for me. He was sitting in judgment that morning, and I took my place in the session as you saw me yesterday.

"There was a cause before him which appeared to be difficult of solution.

"A certain réis had died, leaving a large fortune. He had but one son, and it was doubtful even whether that sole heir was living, for he had left the country long since, in consequence of his marriage to a portionless girl of

some wandering tribe—a connection to which his father would not consent—and no one knew what had become of him.

“On the death of the réis, then, instead of one son to claim the succession, no fewer than three presented themselves, the evidence brought forward by all and each of whom seemed equally entitled to credit; a fact which brought the Nagib into a difficulty with regard to judgment.

“‘My sagacity,’ said he to me, ‘must never be at fault in deciding upon the disputes of my people; otherwise, they would doubt the infallibility of my judgments, and my authority would be diminished. How would you decide on this matter, supposing you were in my place?’

“‘Defer judgment for one month,’ said I.

“‘And then?’

“‘I have an idea on the subject. We will discuss it during that time.’

“The parties were dismissed for a month. Meanwhile, I recommended the Nagib to spread a report that the deceased réis, in order to protect his son from the effects of the evil eye, which he suspected had been cast upon him at his birth, had traced a crescent upon his breast with the point of a djembie.

“Now, if all three claimants were rogues, they would each have made such a mark to show when the time for judgment came, without fearing suspicion, as the scar would have had time to heal: whereas, if one of them was really the son of the deceased, he would have no such mark.

“It all came to pass as I had foretold. Two of the claimants came forward at the end of the month, each displaying a crescent scarified upon his breast, while the third said—

“‘I am the true son of him whose heritage I claim, and yet have I no crescent marked upon my breast like these my adversaries. Some lie has been devised to debar me from justice and rob me of my birthright. Surely one, at least, of these two men must be an impostor.’

“The success of this stratagem so pleased the Nagib that he took me, from that moment, into his confidence. It is by my advice that all his judgments are rendered—the two, for example, that you have lately witnessed were dictated by me. I had been driven to and fro everywhere, from imaum to cheriff, and from cheriff to nagib, until I fell in with Seïd-Abd’el-Rahman, to whom I have thus made myself useful, else should I have been obliged to fly from this country as from others.

“Yet, even here, I am only safe so long as caprice and suspicion slumber. Long have I been telling of my woes to the walls of my dwelling, having no friend to whom I could confide them: but now I have chosen you, O Hadji, because you are a stranger here, like myself, and not going to sojourn long among us. Your frankness and courage, too, have won my esteem, and I would, therefore, warn you of the dangers to which you are going to be exposed.

“The Marebeys and the Hadramites are ever suspicious and jealous of strangers. They will watch you, setting spies upon your actions, your words, and your movements, out in the desert, under your tent, everywhere. The very guards by whom you were lately attended were spies, probably.”

“But of what do these people suspect me?” asked I.

“There exists in this country, as you already know, perhaps,” replied Seïd-Ahmed, “a secret league, implacable in its hostility to all innovations coming from civilized countries. Every Arab here, subject as he is to his prince, even to the extent of life and death, imagines himself, notwithstanding, to be a free man, and fears nothing more than the introduction of slavery from abroad. Wo to those who would undertake to enlighten him, to undermine the superstitions and bigotry so carefully infused into him by the nagibs and their chiefs! who have formed themselves into one great confederation for the maintenance of their power. The simplicity affected by these is assumed merely to deceive

the people. They renounce the external pomps of power in order to enjoy more certainly its reality. They have *regabs* (secret agents) dispersed in every direction, and should any one be rash enough to attempt a reform in the laws and customs of the country, no matter how favorable to the people that reform might be, he would be put to death. Here you must praise every thing, admire all—taking care, besides, that your sincerity be not called in question.

“Traders and merchants only, can hope to pass unharmed through this country: those who come hither from curiosity, men of science, philosophers and all such, are either driven away or cast into the dungeons to meet a lingering death. Since I have dwelt in Mareb, I know of three strangers who have ventured to cross its frontiers. One of these (Arnaud) was driven away not long since. The bones of the others are mouldering in the secret vaults of the tower.”

“To what, then, do I owe the good-will displayed towards me by the Nagib?” inquired I.

“To his vital decay,” replied the taleb—“your reputation had arrived here before you: it was rumored that you had wrought miracles at Abu-Arisch and Sana; that you have the power of destroying or restoring, at will, the sensual vigor; and the Nagib was comforted. But for that, your death had been determined on from the moment of your visit to Kassr-el-Cheïtan.”

This reputation for medical skill arose from the fact that I had cured the Cheriff Hussein of a dangerous malady, and had made some experiments in magnetism among the mountains of Damar.

“But why was I not put to death at the Kassr-el-Cheïtan, like all strangers who had previously ventured upon that mountain?” asked I.

“You owe your safety to chance,” said Seïd Ahmed—“the people there suspected that you had induced the caravan to penetrate the mysteries of that retreat, and, too

weak in numbers to contend against so many, they thought it safer to let you go for the present, hoping for a better opportunity to make you pay for your rashness hereafter."

"Who were the men I saw there?"

"Trusty spies of the great confederation of sovereigns and chiefs—the league of which I told you. From the mountain they watch what is passing, sending the intelligence by their emissaries to all the members of the vast association."

"Is my rashness likely to be pardoned?"

"I know not. Refrain, however, from again attempting to shake the superstitions of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, or of the other Arabs, with regard to Kassr-el-Cheïtan, the redoubtable character of which must be kept up. Talk no more about it, else may your silence be secured by sword or poison."

"I will follow your counsel. But pray tell me how I escaped the dangers of the ordeal? I can account for the leap from the tower and the encounter with the panther, but how did it happen that the fury of my companion of the caravan fell harmless upon me?"

"That man, immediately upon his arrival here, accused you of sorcery, magic, and malignity, demanding that you should be put to death, and that by his own hand. His request was granted; but the Nagib, resolved upon saving your life, caused the bullets to be withdrawn from the pistols, and replaced with false charges to prevent suspicion; and so it came that you escaped with a slight wound. The matter was a simple one as you may perceive. You know better than I can tell you that nothing is supernatural; be equally certain that but few things which may happen to you should be attributed to chance."

I thanked Seïd-Ahmed, promising to remember his advice; and, on taking leave of him, I felt almost as if quitting the house of an old friend, grieved that one so intelligent, so true-hearted, should be thrown among a people from whom he was obliged to conceal his mental sufferings and his thoughts.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BLOOD-MONEY.—TWO PANTHERS.—AN EXECUTION.

Two days after the events recorded in the last chapter, while our people were at their ablutions, or at morning prayers, a deputation arrived from Harib, composed of the chief men of that place, followed by a crowd of hangers-on.

Salutations and compliments exchanged, one of the deputation explained that they came to demand the *dia*, or blood-money, of the Arab killed by Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni.

"O men of Harib," said the réis, "he who fell by my hand was a robber, as I swear by the holy Prophet, in whose name we never swear in vain; and I will swear it at the day of judgment, when Allah will be judge and the angels witnesses.

"For I killed him as he crept toward my tent in the night.

"Nevertheless, justice shall be done toward you, and if the law condemns us to pay the price of blood, we will pay it."

The case was brought before the Nagib, who, having heard the evidence, gave judgment in our favor, as follows:

"This man came in the night to rob the caravan.

"He was killed.

"No blood-money is due for him; because, according to the laws of the Prophet, he who steals in the night must die."

The claimants submitted to this decision without a murmur, for they saw that they had been deceived by the two prisoners set at liberty by us. They returned with us to the encampment, where they were hospitably entertained as friends, after which they departed for Harib, with many good wishes for our prosperity.

When they were gone I went to the tent of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, whom I found engaged over a dish of broiled locusts, of which he invited me to partake. I declined with many thanks, taking a chibouque instead, while coffee was getting ready.

While the réis was munching his locusts with great relish he spoke about the claim made for the blood-money of the robber. "Where should I have got a hundred camels to pay it with, supposing it had been allowed?" asked he.

"A hundred camels!" exclaimed I. "I thought a thousand *dinars** was the amount of *dia* every where?"

"In the towns, where they evade the law, it is," rejoined the réis; "but in the desert it is always a hundred camels. I will tell you the origin of the custom:

"It dates from the time of Abd'el-Moutaleb, grandfather of the Prophet. Abd'el-Moutaleb had but one child. Grieved at this, he addressed a prayer to Heaven: -

"'Vouchsafe nine more sons to me, O Allah! and I swear to sacrifice one of them to thee, in gratitude for thy goodness.'

"Allah heard his prayer.

"Then Abd'el-Moutaleb, faithful to his vow, decided by lot which of his sons was to be the victim.

"The lot fell upon Abd'Allah.

"But the Koreïchites† remonstrating against this sacrifice, it was decided that Abd'Allah should be placed on one side, and ten camels on the other, and that the lots should continue to be drawn until they decided in his favor, ten camels being added to the first ten every time the lot was adverse.

"At the eleventh drawing, Abd'Allah was ransomed, and one hundred camels were sacrificed in his stead.

* Called also *tomans*. The value of a *dinar* is about twelve francs fifty centimes, French money.

† A tribe descended from Koreïch, one of the twelve sons of Ishmael, and then in possession of Mecca and the holy territory.

"Some time after this event, Allah manifested his satisfaction with what had been done, for Abd'Allah became the father of Mohammed, our Prophet.

"And ever since those days the price of blood, the *dia* of the wandering Arab, has been held at one hundred camels everywhere in the desert."

The réis, hearing that I was determined to push on with the caravan, now told me that the time of our departure was fixed for midnight the following day. This evening, he proposed, we should go and bathe in the Dona, saying that he would call for me after the evening prayer.

Having retired to my tent, I took my journal from its case, and wrote down in it, as well as I could, an account of everything witnessed by me since my arrival at Mareb. I say *as well as I could*, because, fearful of being watched, I was obliged to lay my work aside at the least noise from without, for I should probably have forfeited my life had I been detected at that kind of business.

At six o'clock, supper was brought by the black slaves of the Nagib, as usual; and, soon after the evening prayer, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni called for me, according to his promise.

The setting sun, rayless and red as a furnace, was tinging the western horizon with a crimson flush. Upward, his burning light was gradually melting, by fine gradations, into orange, yellow, pale green, and sapphire blue. Long bars of pale light hung upon the sunset. The flashing stars of the Great Bear seemed to hover in space, and the Milky Way rippled overhead like a river of diamonds. Then the bright moon came forth from behind a curtain of clouds, paling the lights of our encampment, and shedding a silvery radiance over caravan and landscape alike.

There is an unspeakable charm about these nights in Arabia, tranquillizing the mind into a state of calm repose. The unity of the picture produces unity of thought, reflection falling softly upon the spirit like the pleasant freshness of the evening dew, while the harmony that pervades all

nature overcomes us like a sweet melody—like the soft voice of woman ringing through the greenwood—like the song of the linnet by the shady edges of a crystal brook. It is then that the soul yearns to pour forth the thoughts with which it is teeming, trustful of sympathy in the glad influence around.

It was on one of these perfumed nights of the romantic East that we wended our way to the banks of the Dona, on reaching which we found them occupied by female bathers; for, at Mareb, the men and women bathe in the river on alternate nights, and we, uninformed of this arrangement, happened to come there somewhat *malàpropos*, a mistake that might have led to serious results for us, if we had not immediately retreated.

We had gained some distance from the groups of bathers when we were startled by a shrill, agonizing cry, which seemed to come from that direction. Retracing our steps in haste, we found the bathers crowding together in consternation, a dozen young girls in the midst of them tearing out their hair and beating themselves with all their might, according to the Arab custom, in token of despair. From these girls we learned that, just as they were plunging into the river, an enormous panther sprang among them, and seizing one, threw her upon his back, and fled away toward the mountain with his prey.

In a short time, more than three hundred Arabs had arrived at the spot, some armed with lances and battle-axes, others with cimeters, pistols, and matchlocks; for, so piercing was the cry of the young girl carried off by the savage beast, that it had penetrated to the encampment, and was heard in the still night through the gardens and dwellings of Mareb. People guessed, by instinct, at the cause of it, armed themselves in haste, and came down upon the banks of the Dona.

Just as they arrived, the terrible yells of panthers indicated the course to be taken. Then every man uttered an

imprecation ; abbeyes were tucked up, arms made ready for action, and the avengers dashed forward in pursuit of the fierce prowler.

In a short time they had crossed the Valley of the Dikes, and gained the foot of one of the mountains by which it is flanked, up which, in the bright moonlight, they saw two panthers going at great speed. The foremost of the two beasts appeared to bound forward with great difficulty, encumbered as he was with the burden carried by him. By a providential chance the girl—a child of eight or nine years—had so fallen on the panther's back that she could clasp the neck of the monster with her arms, clinging to him with all her might, and burying her hands in his thick fur. The second panther could readily have out-stripped the first, but appeared to keep behind for the purpose of covering the retreat.

Once in view of the panthers, the hunters, hitherto scattered upon the track, closed together into a compact group, each man pressing forward and putting himself to the top of his speed to be the first at the attack. A hundred reports now rang through the hollows of the mountain, and the hindmost panther rolled heavily to the ground, uttering frightful yells.

The other beast, seeing that his pursuers were gaining upon him, and frightened, probably, by the shots, redoubled his efforts to escape, still keeping fast hold of his victim.

But the space between him and the hunters was diminishing, visibly. Long since they would have fired on him, but through fear of injuring the child, to save whom the only chance appeared to be to attack the animal with lance and sword. Twenty of the pursuers, more nimble, more vigorous than the rest, were now upon him, when, suddenly, he dived into a hole under a great mass of a rock, and disappeared from their view.

Now, who dares to follow ? The hunters are looking at each other, in fear and doubt, when a young man from

among them throws off his sommada, abbaye and fouta, places his cimeter between his teeth, and, taking a torch and axe in one hand, and a pistol in the other, creeps into the cavern.

The panther, dazzled by the light of the torch, sat still in the chamber of the den, the young girl lying on the floor beside her, swooning, but not dead, for her body was still palpitating. The hunter looked steadily at the wild beast, who glared in turn upon him, gathering herself up for a spring, while the grotto resounded with her angry growls: her eyes glowing like globes of fire; her hair bristling up on end, and her tail thrashing her flanks as she curled her lips to display her terrible teeth. For, exhausted as she was by her long run, she was ready to do battle—no longer, however, for her prey, but now in defense of her cubs, which were in the den—for this was the female panther.

Before she could spring upon him, however, the hunter took steady aim, and sent a pistol bullet through her shoulder. Then came fearful plunges and yells, and a deadly combat between man and beast—and then, a dead silence.

Now some of those outside, shamed into action crept into the den, from which they soon emerged, some dragging with them the body of the panther, while others carried out the young girl, and assisted her defender, who was wounded.

Here Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, lifting up his voice, cried in a loud tone, "Allah has clearly extended his protection to this young girl, for, not only has he sent a man of rare courage to defend her, but also one of unlimited knowledge to heal her wounds. Approach, Hadji," continued he, addressing me, "approach, and restore fully to life her who has been, who is still, perhaps, at the point of death."

A passage was made for me through the crowd, but, having nothing whatever with me in the way of remedies, I recommended that the wounded should be at once carried to the encampment; and, in little more than a quarter of an hour, they were both under my tent.

By this time the little girl had partially recovered her senses, but she had a very severe wound in the side, where the panther had seized her with his teeth to throw her on his back. There was nothing in it, however, to dispel hopes of her recovery.

The young man was severely lacerated on the breast, arms and legs, but no bones were broken, nor was any joint displaced. He was able to move about; and, while I was attending to the wounds of the child, he treated his in the manner practiced by the Arabs for staunching a flow of blood, by putting a handful of mud on them.

Several persons who had witnessed the events just narrated had gone to find the bodies of the two panthers, and take their cubs from the den; and, having come down to the town with their trophies, they told the story of the hunt, which soon found its way to the Tower, for in no country does a story run faster than in Arabia.

Just as the wounded were leaving the encampment, a tumult of many voices reached us, and at the same time, notwithstanding the bright moonlight, the air lightened with a red glow, like that of some great conflagration—for the people of the town were coming toward us with shouts of joy, in a great torch-light procession, the Nagib and his chief men at their head.

“Hadji,” said the Nagib, advancing towards me, “I thank you for the care you have bestowed on this child, who is a relative of mine, and one tenderly loved by her family.”

Then, calling to him the young Arab who had saved her, he asked him what he was.

“I am nothing but a poor *rakka*” (messenger), was the reply.

“Good!” continued the Nagib, “you have a just claim upon my gratitude. I here constitute you one of my chiefs, nor will I fail to furnish you with the means for figuring creditably among them: and, further, you are from this

moment the affianced husband of her whom you have snatched from death, who shall be your wife if it should please Allah to spare her life until she comes of age."

"Allah be praised and preserve our Nagib!" cried the young man.

"Allah be praised and preserve our Nagib!" repeated the people.

And then a band of music, consisting of all the amateurs of the town, made the air vibrate with the sound of their instruments.

Four or five litters were constructed on the spot, upon one of which the young girl was placed, and her deliverer on another. They made me get upon one also; and, on the others, which followed in our train, they drew along the dead panthers and their cubs, the latter contributing their squalls to the loud cries of the populace. Thus we moved forward in triumphal procession; the music first, the Nagib and his chiefs following it, and then the litters, for the honor of bearing which on their shoulders the crowd fought and struggled. The people brought up the rear, uttering shouts of joy, blessing Allah, and praising the courage of the young man, and the goodness of the Nagib who had so nobly rewarded him.

In this order we proceeded from the encampment towards the town, lighted by about twice as many torches as there were people, for nearly every one of our followers carried one in each hand. The procession took its way through all the streets of Mareb, and the night was far advanced when this improvised festival was brought to a close.

Meantime, our encampment had been deserted by the greater number of people belonging to it, who had joined the procession; and the chouafs, diverted from their duties by the tumult, had given opportunity to the thieves of the neighborhood, numbers of whom glided in among the tents, carrying off every thing they could lay their hands on. Before they could decamp with their plunder, however,

they were discovered by an old woman, who spread the alarm through the caravan, and the thieves fled, leaving their booty behind.

But the chaousses, and others who remained at the encampment, dashed out in pursuit, soon joined by our party—and, spreading ourselves over the ravines, rocks and thickets, we captured forty of the marauders, who were immediately bound with cords and put in charge of a guard.

Towards three o'clock I returned to my tent, and the rest of the night passed tranquilly for all, except, perhaps, for the forty thieves, who knew well that their heads must come off in the morning.

And so it came to pass; for, on the morning of Sunday, the thirteenth of August, 1844, at day break, they were all beheaded in front of the Tower.

While preparations were going on for the execution, a benevolent man—doubtless one of that school of philanthropic philosophers who insist on the abolition of capital punishment—approached the Nagib, interceding in favor of the thieves, and praying that their lives might be spared.

The Nagib heard him, calmly; and then, handing him over to the executioner, said,

“Behead me this fellow with the rest of them. The man who interests himself for such reprobates as these must be their accomplice.”

It was done accordingly. And if there is any thing in the maxim, *numero Deus impare gaudet*, then must the gods have been satisfied; for forty heads and one were taken off that morning, instead of forty.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DEPARTURE FROM MAREB.

WHEN the execution was over we returned to the encampment, where each busied himself in making arrangements for the departure, which was to take place at midnight.

About noon the principal traders of the town called upon us, with a request that Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni would take fifty of them along with the caravan, together with their beasts and merchandise, as far as Doân.

“O, my children!” said the réis, in whose tent I was when the deputation arrived, “I consent, willingly, to conduct you whither you desire; and, if it so pleases Allah, I will take you there by a safe route, along which neither you nor your camels will suffer from hunger and thirst.”

“It is because we have confidence in you that we make this request,” rejoined the merchant who acted as spokesman on the occasion.

“That confidence shall not be violated,” said the réis—“I engage to conduct you peaceably through the tribes and wandering peoples to be encountered by us. Most of these tribes, as you know, are proud and powerful; so, forget not the maxim—*If he of whom you would ask a favor is mounted upon an ass, say to him—What a splendid horse you have got there, Sidi!*”

“Others, who are covetous and dangerous, you must propitiate and be cautious of. In such cases, when I wink at you with my eyes, be not sparing of your gifts: but when I say—‘Look to yourselves!’—be on the alert. Observe every thing with watchful eyes, and let not a word that is spoken escape your ears. By following these instructions all will be well. Return, now, to your dwellings; make yourselves ready for the route, and be here by eleven; for we leave at midnight.”

When Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni had made this speech, with all the importance that his position warranted, he condescendingly accepted some presents offered him, and the merchants took their leave.

I sent Mohammed for my dromedaries, which were pasturing with those of the Nagib, whose guest I was, as I have already mentioned. By the time he returned, Selim and Saïda had packed up every thing except the tent, and such few articles as we required for use until the moment of departure. Meanwhile, I occupied myself in writing to the Imaum of Sana, with whom I had promised to communicate upon my arrival at Mareb, but had postponed doing so until now, in order that he might have the satisfaction of knowing that I had outlived my sojourn in that city.

To the supper sent by him to my tent on this, the last occasion, the Nagib added many delicacies which he supposed would be agreeable to me, sending also some presents, and fifty purses—the latter being equivalent to about twelve hundred francs. These purses, which are made up in little linen bags, sealed with the seal of the treasury, are a usual accompaniment of gifts all through the East.

Among the presents, I recognized the famous cutlass, with gilt scabbard and jeweled hilt, that was flourished over my head the day I arrived at Mareb.

After supper, while Selim and Mohammed packed the tent and utensils, and got my five dromedaries ready to fall into their places in the line of march, I went to the tower to take leave of the Nagib, and thank him for his kindness to me during the five days passed by us at Mareb. I found him upon the terraced roof, with five or six of his chiefs, who, as before, retired, leaving us together. Then, as we sipped our coffee and smoked, we talked about Mecca, Husseïn, Abu-Arisch and the Imaum of Sana; the Nagib also advising me as to my actions in traveling through Mareb

and Hadramaut, and asking my advice in turn, with regard to his restoration to health and vigor.

His items of counsel were dealt out in an amusing way, as if on the principle of cash down, or payment in advance rather, each of them being reserved until I had given him an equivalent for it in prescriptions and advice. Our conversation was kept up until about half-past eleven, when he clapped his hands, and the slaves brought in a collation of dried fruits, camel's milk, and assida, for, as he said, "we must partake once more of the bread and salt together before we part."

The collation disposed of, we embraced according to the Arab custom; and, having recited together the Fatha, took leave of each other.

A quarter of an hour after, I joined the encampment, or rather, what had been the encampment, for the caravan was now all in motion, man and beast. On our arrival at Mareb our numbers had been diminished by fifty men and one hundred dromedaries, who were bound for Aïnad, fifty-three leagues to the east of us, and one day's journey south of Kubr-el-Houd, the tomb of the patriarch Houd, spoken of in the Koran, and commonly supposed to be the Joktan of the Bible. To that sepulcher a pilgrimage is made in the month of *chaban*, every year, drawing thither a great concourse from Mareb and Hadramaut.

On quitting Mareb, our numbers were replaced by an equivalent in men, and double the force of dromedaries that had been detached from us. Just before giving the signal for starting, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni summoned all the members of the caravan about him, and, surveying them with a patronizing look, said, in a loud voice:

"Hearken to me, my children, hearken! many of you are strangers one to another, and we have a long journey before us.

"Let him who has malice in his heart suppress it. Let your hearts be large: love each other, and avoid disputes,

“For a dispute is like a conflagration: Allah curses him who kindles it, and blesses him who extinguishes it.

“Be not tempted by the property of your neighbors, but assist and relieve one another.

“You are under my command, and I mean to be strict with you.

“I will levy fines, I will punish with the bastinado; for of this caravan I am sole master.

“Think of the proverb, ‘Two captains to a ship, and she founders.’”

When the réis had delivered himself of this oration, all the people swore upon the Koran to submit strictly to his authority; and as all was now ready, he gave the signal for our departure.

Once more, then, our line moved on, accompanied by crowds of people from Mareb, and from the neighboring villages and douars, most of whom left us at about half a league from the town. Those who had friends and relatives in the caravan, however, followed us as far as Bir-el-Naga, or the Camel's Well, where we arrived at two o'clock in the morning.

A caravan so large as ours never leaves Mareb without a similar demonstration on the part of the inhabitants, who look upon it as a duty to extend such mark of sympathy to people who are quitting their friends and families, perhaps for ever.

As most of us traveled on foot, mixed up with the crowd of followers, we made our first two leagues almost without knowing it. Our route lay over a sandy tract; but the country was fertile and well wooded, nevertheless, irrigated, as it always is, by the Dona, which rises near Kousen, a small town of some three thousand inhabitants, situated in the mountains of that name, at a distance of about sixteen leagues from Mareb.

On our arrival at Bir-el-Naga, the réis, feeling the importance of his position expanding as we advanced, and

determined this time to have nothing to reproach himself with as regarded precautions, again caused the company to assemble before him, when he addressed them as follows :

“ Be not impatient of my advice, for I can not repeat it to you too often.

“ Danger is now before us ; be upon your guard.

“ Our caravan is as strong as a town ; we must not lose it from negligence. It consists of nearly three hundred men, without counting slaves, and four hundred and fifty camels.

“ At each halt, be careful to tie your animals securely by two feet, so that they can neither be stolen nor stray away.

“ By day, I will watch over you ; by night, fire upon everybody who comes prowling about us.

“ Sleep upon your loaded firearms, and never divest yourselves of your girdles.

“ On the smallest alarm, rise up like one man ; and remember, O people of the caravan ! that from this day forward, *your firelocks are your best friends !*”

Having taken leave of those who had accompanied us so far, we left Bir-el-Naga about three in the morning, and took the route for Kousen, traveling in a different order from that heretofore adopted by us.

When a caravan is weak in numbers, the members of it keep well together, advancing in close columns as much as possible. But large companies break themselves up into sections in file, with intervals of one hundred and fifty or two hundred paces between them. This is done to avoid a shock, in case of a camel falling, which, happening in a large crowd of animals, leads to confusion, throwing others down, and making it difficult to get them on their legs again, and replace their loads. It also diminishes the inconvenience arising from the dust and drifting sand ; nor does it in any way interfere with the mutual protection of the company, the members of which close up at once in case of alarm.

But no matter how strong a caravan may be, proper means are always taken for negotiating with the tribes through whose territories it passes. In these diplomatic arrangements, however, hand upon sword is the rule; for a caravan, like the most civilized of the fixed communities, takes warning from the maxim, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*.

During the whole of this journey, according to his promise to the merchants of Mareb, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni arranged treaties of peace, or of truce, with the various tribes encountered by us, except in cases where he paid them tribute instead. These treaties were based upon rights and usages established from time immemorial, and which are held in traditional respect.

These usages of the nomad tribes with respect to the caravans are so well understood, that negotiations are often carried on by signals only, without having recourse to conference. The leaders of a caravan can tell at once whether they have to deal with a hostile, neutral, or friendly tribe, and they govern their actions accordingly.

Our present order, then, was in bands of fifty camels each, with intervals of equal length between them. Behind each of these divisions followed the chaousses and conductors, to look after the order of march, and urge on tardy animals.

This order was observed by us all the way to Doân, except in the mountain regions, through the gorges of which we were often obliged to pass in single file.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LEGEND OF SÉID-NASSIB.—A QUEER PHILOSOPHER.—KOUSEN.

TRAVELING onward all night without adventure, we halted, about seven in the morning, at Bir-el-Nassib, a place renowned among the tribes of the desert for the purity and abundance of its water, to which supernatural qualities are attributed by the superstitious. It lies midway between Mareb and Kousen; and the route leading to it from Bir-el-Naga is varied with shifting sands, hills, and mountains, which made it very fatiguing to our animals.

After we had pitched our tents, and partaken of some refreshment, I asked Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni why the name *Nassib* was given to this well.

"It is the name," replied he, "of a holy anchoret, whose life was passed in good works, and who lies buried at Kousen.

"He was the guardian spirit of these mountains, through which he guided the weary traveler. Moreover, he was one who feared Allah, and set the goods of this world at naught.

"Over his heart the evil spirit had no dominion.

"One day, Eblis, the demon of darkness, sought Allah, and said unto him: 'Séid-Nassib is a hypocrite; he professes to despise riches, but that is for envy that he has them not. Were he rich he would like, as others, to possess handsome slaves, stately coursers, jeweled weapons, and fine raiment. He would take his pleasure in the chase, in fêtes, and in fancies. He would be a follower of mine.'

"'Bad spirit,' replied Allah, "thou slanderest my sincere worshiper. Séid-Nassib is a holy man. Hence thy malice.'

“ ‘Let me tempt him,’ said Eblis ; ‘let me but try, for I am sure that he is no better than another.’

“ ‘I will deliver him to thy temptations, then,’ said Allah, ‘from the setting of the sun, to-day, until the setting thereof, to-morrow, upon one condition. If Séid-Nassib triumphs over thy sorceries, not only shalt thou have no further power over him, body or soul, but, during his time on earth, thou shalt be his slave, and must obey him in all things.’

“The bargain was thus concluded.

“That evening, at sunset prayer, when Séid-Nassib came to the well, as usual, to perform his ablutions, he drew up from it his water-bottle full of silver to the brim.

“ ‘O Allah!’ cried he, ‘it is not for silver that I ask thee, but for water to wash ;’ and having emptied his water-bottle on the sand, he again dipped it in the well.

“And this time he drew it up filled with gold.

“ ‘O Allah!’ exclaimed he again, ‘I want not this earthly dross. Wherefore dost Thou send me gold, that metal which corrupteth men, causing them to forsake justice, and even to sell their brethren ? Withdraw not Thy regards from Thy servant, but send him water, that he may wash and be clean, according to the law.’ And he poured forth the gold on the sand, over the silver.

“A third time he dipped his water-bottle in the well, and it came to him filled with precious stones.

“ ‘O Allah!’ cried he again, out-casting them upon the gold and the silver strewn at his feet, ‘must I, then, make my ablutions with the sands of the desert, like an Arab on his journey?’ And a fourth time he dipped the water-bottle in the well.

“And now, on withdrawing it, he found it so heavy that it was with great difficulty he brought it to the surface ; and lo ! it contained a casket of iron, with flames painted on the lid, and when he laid hold of it, it was burning hot.

“And then the holy man cried, ‘O Allah ! surely this

little iron casket cannot contain cold water from the well, seeing that it is red hot.' And he plunged his water-bottle a fifth time into the well.

"And this time it was empty when he drew it up—the few grains of sand that stuck to it proving that the well was dry.

"'Since it appears that such is thy will, O Allah!' then cried Séïd-Nassib, 'I will open the casket to see what it contains.'

"And when he had opened it, all was changed around him. He found himself seated upon a throne of solid gold, clad in raiment rich with embroidery and precious stones, and waited on by servants in fine vestments, armed with weapons of sumptuous finish.

"Hard by were the chiefs of his troops, and next them the nobles and men of rank. Then came a great gathering of the merchants and the tradesmen, and behind them the mechanics and workmen, bowing down with their heads in the dust.

"So great was the multitude that the eye could not take it in. It seemed as though all the inhabitants of Arabia had come to bow down before his throne.

"And he who was nearest to him said, 'Sidi, thou art our sovereign, and we are ready to do thy bidding. Give but thine orders, and they shall be executed.'

"But the holy anchoret said, 'O Allah! I have always thought that men ought to have no master save Thee alone, whose law only can dispense justice unto them. Withdraw from me, then, this power, which will surely render me proud, unjust, and cruel.'

"With his eyes raised toward heaven he thus prayed, and when he again looked down upon the earth he saw that the heap of gold, silver, and precious stones had melted away into a clear, limpid spring; that the throne and crowd of people around it had vanished, and that the iron casket had buried itself in a deep hole at his feet,

“*Allah akhbar!*—Allah is great!’ cried he, and, bowing himself down, he performed his ablutions.

“The following evening, as he returned to his hut, he saw from a distance a great company of women, who crowded round him when he came near.

“And each of them, standing before him in turn, uncovered her face, which was of marvelous beauty.

“They were of all complexions; from the pale as milk to the black as ebony, and all the intermediate shades.

“And their looks reflected the temper of their minds; for some were languishing, amorous, gentle, and artless; others passionate, sprightly, wanton, and high-spirited.

“And each of them said to him, one after the other: ‘I am beautiful above all; I love you, and am come to offer myself to you; I have wealth to procure the luxuries that I love, and if my charms have the least power over you, leave your retreat and come with me to taste all the pleasures of the earth.’

“And when Séid-Nassib had heard them all he said: ‘If you had loved me you would not have proposed that I should abandon my retreat, but would rather have wished to share it with me. I will not go forth with you into the world, for I wish not to sully myself with its vices.’

“At this moment the sun set. A great cry arose, and the company of women vanished away. And then came Eblis and prostrated himself before the holy man, saying:

“‘Unto the end of thy days I am thy slave; order and I obey—it is the will of Allah.’

“‘Away!’ cried Séid-Nassib to him. ‘When I have need of thee I will summon thee.’ And Eblis disappeared into the hole where the casket had buried itself.

“From that day the well has always supplied delicious water in abundance. And Séid-Nassib, to the day of his death, was the Providence of these countries. For when the simoom blew and a caravan was about to perish; when a crime was about to be committed; when a savage beast

was about to spring upon a human victim, he summoned Eblis, and sent him to prevent the deed. So that while this holy man lived no person perished of thirst, or of hunger, or of any violent death, in the desert."

When the réis had related his legend, he pointed to a stone that lay near the well, saying :

"That is the spot where the hole was into which the casket and the Evil One vanished, and it was from thence that the latter came whenever summoned by Séïd-Nassib."

"And if the stone was raised would that door of hell be visible?" asked I.

"The aperture closed itself," replied the réis, "as soon as the holy man had rendered up his last breath."

And so it is that all nations have their superstitions. But it is curious to mark the family likeness between legends from the most remote ages to our day, in all quarters of the globe. This would go to prove that the imagination of man, by some said to be infinite, has, nevertheless, its limits—for what is the temptation of St. Anthony but a plagiarism from the temptation of Séïd-Nassib?

Ever since the day when the wife of Hamza had experienced a change for the better, I had been unremitting in my attendance upon her, and her husband had become my devoted friend, instead of the mortal foe he had previously been.

To-day, before the hour of the siesta, I went to visit her; for it appeared to me that this houri, as her husband called her, derived benefit from even a sight of me—and I remarked that, on this occasion, she regarded me with an expression for which I was at a loss to account. Unable to solve the mystery, however, I did not prolong my visit, but retired when the hour for repose was at hand.

At seven in the evening we took our leave of the renowned well of Bir-el-Nassib, addressing a thanksgiving to the holy anchoret who had rendered the waters of it so pure and abundant.

A well, for the inhabitant of the desert, is almost as much a place of worship as his chapel for the Christian. By the well-side he offers up his most fervent prayers; fearing, while there, to foster an evil thought or to utter an imprecation, lest these might trouble the waters. The place is sanctified—and there is an understood agreement among all travelers to be economical of the water, as well as to repair, from time to time, the fence of dry stone or hurdles built around the well as a barrier against the drifting sand. Before leaving, too, they cover it over carefully with grass, skins, or thick bushes, without which precaution it would soon be drifted up.

Leaving Bir-el-Nassib, the road becomes more and more precipitous, winding every where through sand-hills and mountains. Unlike that, however, traveled by us from Sana to Mareb, it is smooth, seeming to have been made so purposely to spare the delicate foot of the camel, which explains the increased rate of speed made by them on this journey.

To the right hand and the left, still those great masses of granite, striped with black lines from summit to base—the blocks tumbled upon each other at an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon.

At the midnight halt, while I was examining the place where we stopped, I saw something move through an opening in the rock, but could not exactly make out what it was.

“It must be a jackal,” said Hamza, to whom I pointed out the object as it moved among the dark hollows of the rocks.

“It is an owl, I think,” said Selim.

“Not so,” rejoined a chaousse; “it looks more like a fox.”

To which another added—“I will bet it is a hyena, for they are plenty hereabouts.”

“Be it jackal, owl, fox, or hyena, I will not undertake to

decide," said one of the naïbs—"but a shot from a match-lock pointed straight will soon settle the business"—and he was going to carry out his suggestion, when the réis, who now came to the spot, struck up his weapon saying :

"Hold, you fool ! you were going to shoot a man."

The creature that came so near being made a target of had retreated on observing the movement of the naïb, vanishing like a shadow. But, a moment after, it again made its appearance, and, seeing that the danger was past, came forth from its den, holding in one hand a bowl of milk and leading a goat with the other.

It proved to be a little, withered old man, with a snow-white beard like that of a goat, but a piercing, lynx-like eye.

"Friend," said Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, addressing him, "you came near being the victim of a mistake, for which we owe you some indemnity."

"The last hour of old Abd'Allah was not yet," said the being—"say what you will, my death was not written down for this day in the great book of destiny"—adding, as the réis offered him a purse, "a poor wretch like me, with a purse in his girdle, would be like a man, cup in hand, before a dry well."

"What, then, can we do for you ?"

"Give me some garments, and a little assida, and may Allah be with you."

"We will give what you ask for—but first tell us wherefore you dwell in a place that, at best, would be fit for a jackal or a fox."

"Wherefore should he build unto whom Allah offers a dwelling ? Yonder grotto shelters my family, my flocks and my property, which is not much, to be sure. It protects me from the rain, and shades me from the heat, and what more does one want in this world ? As for me, it is all I require."

Here the old Arab gave a wild yell, at which there

emerged from the cavern a thin, withered woman, blackened and shriveled with smoke. She led, by the hands, two stunted children, moulded much after her own pattern of physical beauty. A third, somewhat older, followed.

The réis and I entered the cavern, which was so low that we could not stand upright in it. Some skins of sheep and goats, spread upon the floor, and a few utensils of wood, composed the furniture—while, suspended upon the rocky wall, were a matchlock and a djembie. The hearth was formed of three stones, and there was no escape for the smoke except through the doorway. Some thirty sheep and goats lay about the floor—and a small baby, cradled in a leathern hammock, was sleeping tranquilly in an atmosphere of smoke enough to blind any person not accustomed to it.

Glad to get out of his den, we bestowed upon this Arab Diogenes the articles desired by him, receiving from him, in return, all manner of good wishes for our prosperity.

What manner of man, then, was this, taking things as he found them, content with his miserable shelter against the rain and the heat? Was he a genuine philosopher?

In the desert, as in great cities, are to be found men whose life is a mystery. Such a one, there is good reason for supposing, was this old graybeard, who, an outcast from society—one branded, probably, by the laws of his country—assumed, for sinister purposes, the character acted by him.

I have already spoken of the secret agents of the great alliance of the chiefs of Mareb and Hadramaut. Among ourselves, such offices of espionage are often filled by debased characters, whose fidelity has a guarantee in the doom suspended over them for some crime; and so it is in Arabia, where criminals are sometimes forced to the performance of duties that would be distasteful to the poor, but honest man.

Thus in the desert, when we meet with a man like this philosopher, consorting with beasts in a cavern, far from the

haunts of men, we may generally set him down as a criminal, whose punishment has been commuted on condition of his remaining faithfully at the post appointed for him. From thence he watches all who pass, making his reports, from time to time, to the emissaries of the confederation, who pay occasional visits to his den, on their rounds of the desert.

Our route still led through deep gorges in the mountains. About three o'clock the caravan came to a halt, and the djemels busied themselves in shifting forward the loads of their camels, to prepare them for ascending a steep hill, the path over which being broken and stony, we dismounted from our dromedaries, and prepared to make the ascent on foot.

It took us about two hours to reach the summit. The descent, on the other side, very steep at first, became less so as we advanced towards Kousen, where we arrived at six o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, the fifteenth of August.

The people, notified of our coming even before our departure from Mareb, were watching for us at the foot of the mountain, where we set up our encampment—and we were hardly installed, when traffic and barter commenced.

The mountains by which Kousen is surrounded are composed of chains of sandy, or stony hills, interspersed with ravines, and with small plains watered by the Dona. The well-shaded gardens, and the numerous date and fig trees about this little town, make it a most charming retreat. These gardens produce abundance of grapes and melons. Fields of wheat, tilled with the mattock, and irrigated by means of trenches, furnish bread sufficient for the wants of the inhabitants, who live chiefly upon figs and dates.

The neighboring country swarms with ruffed sheep, gazelles, antelopes, jackals, lynxes, foxes, hyenas, ostriches, porcupines, hedgehogs, hares, rabbits, lizards, horned vipers, lions, and panthers.

In the valleys, and on the plateaux of the mountains, are to be found eagles, vultures, ravens, pigeons, quails, black-birds, finches, and sparrows.

The town of Kousen consists of about two hundred houses, some built of stone, others of wood. It is surrounded by a wall about twelve feet high, in which there are two gates. Here, as at Mareb and most other towns of this country, there is a square tower, in which the chief of the place resides. This personage happened to be sick, so that we had not the pleasure of seeing him—a circumstance which, while I feigned great concern on account of it, gave me very considerable satisfaction.

There is but one mosque here—a small one surmounted by a minaret; hard by which is the tomb of Séïd-Nassib, already mentioned by me.

This tomb, like that of all Mohammedan saints, is surmounted by a small dome, or *kobba*. It is regarded with peculiar veneration, and, in dry seasons, processions of people from all parts of the country come to it, to pray for rain—a ceremony which bears a striking analogy to the rogation fêtes of the Catholic Church.

Sick people are brought hither also, to pray for a cure; and many are found who profess and believe that they have thus recovered from infirmities generally supposed to be incurable. So much for faith!

The whole of this day, excepting the hour of the siesta, was devoted to trade. At the usual hour, between seven and eight in the evening, we departed from Kousen.

CHAPTER XIX.

ABËSCHA.—THE LEGEND OF BENI-SCHIDDAD.—OUR FIRST TRIBUTE.—
CONVERSATION WITH HAMZA.

ABOUT a league beyond Kousen we entered a narrow valley, sprinkled here and there with prickly shrubs, upon which our camels browsed as they passed.

The mountains by which this valley is hemmed in are very lofty. Those to the north are of granite—but those toward the south appear to be of more recent formation, and are composed of a calcareous, calcined stone. The sides of these mountains, in some places, bear marks of the action of water; while the valley itself is exactly like the bed of a dried-up river, covered as it is with sand, shells, and round pebbles, brought thither by the torrents.

This valley is of great length, our passage through it occupying nearly five hours. At the end of it the two chains of mountains approach so near each other, that the road becomes a narrow gorge, sandy at first, but soon changing to a smooth floor of granite.

We soon reached a plain, at the entrance of which we halted until three o'clock. The rain waters of all the neighboring valleys come down upon this plain, dashing with impetuosity towards Kousen, through the valley just described by me, beyond which they are carried up by evaporation, or absorbed by the sand. It would be certain destruction to a caravan to be surprised in the gorge by one of these torrents—on which account the Arabs take every precaution to prevent such a mishap.

Four hours after leaving the plain we encamped near a dry water-course, bounded on the east by a segment of hills, upon one of which was perched the hut of a shep-

herd : and to the right, a little further on, we saw a whole village grouped on the summit of a high peak.

On this journey, Hamza had taken his place in the section of the caravan to which I belonged. Ever since I had succeeded in restoring his wife, or, rather, since rest, youth, and a good constitution had nearly effected her cure, I had been adopted by this man as his guardian spirit, danger seeming to be as nothing to him, so long as he was under my protection. He was the type of the hot-blooded Arab ; a man unlimited in his hates as in his likings ; superstitious, credulous, suspicious, and confiding, to excess.

At every halt since our departure from Mareb, he came to look for me, to invite me to have coffee and smoke my chibouque in his tent—to save him which trouble I went there to-day, without invitation. For I wanted an explanation of the stolen glances of the beautiful ÆÏsha—and I hoped that an accidental word, or gesture, might, perchance, solve the mystery.

“Hadji,” said Hamza, soon after I had entered his tent, “I must leave you with ÆÏsha, for I have promised to take coffee with one of the merchants who joined the caravan at Mareb.

“With Ibn-Ali, I suppose,” said I.

“Yes,” rejoined Hamza ; “but how did you know ?”

“Because he is so obsequious to everybody. Cordiality and frankness are not to be objected to ; but when a man pries into the private affairs of another, under pretense of showing civility to him, there is something suspicious in it.”

“I will tell you the result of my visit to him,” said Hamza, and he went out, leaving me alone with ÆÏsha.

For a moment she remained silent, regarding me with a look that had something in it of mental suffering. My position was rather embarrassing, for I hardly knew how to begin the conversation.

She spoke first, however, saying,

"You must be on terms of great friendship with Hamza, O Hadji! else he had not left you alone with me. Your influence over him is great. O that you would exert it in my favor! for unhappy is my lot with Hamza, because of his fierce jealousy. I can not set foot outside of the tent, nor can I speak to a slave, without awakening his suspicions, and bringing upon myself reproaches and abuse."

"That proves his love for you—and he is only jealous because you are so beautiful," said I, gallantly. "But how can I be of use to you in the matter?"

"By telling him to restore to me the happiness that once blessed our union, when he was trustful in me, and found no fault. Do this, and my friendship for you shall rival his."

I confess that I was rather disappointed at this proposition; not that I had the least idea of devising an intrigue with this woman—wife of a man who reposed such confidence in me—but my *amour propre* would have been better suited had it turned out that Mrs. Hamza was terribly smitten with me.

Such is man. He likes to have the offer even of that which he does not intend to accept.

To my way of thinking, there is no more embarrassing position for a man than that of confidential adviser to a married woman, for he runs all the risk of a lover without any compensation for his pains; nevertheless, I could not refuse to accede to Aeïscha's request, resolving, at the same time, to meddle as little as possible with these domestic differences.

I took my leave before Hamza returned.

The village near which we were encamped was inhabited by a branch of the powerful tribe of Béni-Schiddad, which was always at war with that of Béni-Nauf, a tribe camping more to the east. These two tribes are the richest in the land of Mareb, possessing great droves of camels and dromedaries, besides multitudes of sheep and goats.

The Béni-Schiddad profess to derive their origin from Scheddad-ben-Ad, one of the first Tobbas, or kings, of Yemen. The Koran tells us that—

“Ad, the father and chief of the Adites, established himself, we are told, in the desert soon after the confusion of tongues.

“There he founded Irem, a city which was already great and powerful before he died.

“His son, Scheddad, succeeded unto him in the government of the tribe, adding much to his dominions.

“Among the wonders made by him were a sumptuous palace, built of bricks of gold, and some hanging gardens, which he aimed to make equal to that of Eden.

“The fruits in it, and the flowers, were of rubies and of emeralds.

“On the boughs of the trees were artificial birds, balancing themselves as if alive; their bodies filled with sweet perfumes, shedding delicious odors upon the air.

“Scheddad, proud of this creation, imagined himself a god, and sought to be worshiped.

“But Heaven permitted not his pride and his impiety to go unpunished.

“He was smitten with a thunderbolt when he was going to take possession of his palace, which was just finished.”

It was difficult to ascertain exactly the number of warriors that these two tribes could send into the field, for the reports of the Arabs on such subjects are always conflicting, but there is reason for supposing that each of them could levy a force of from ten to twelve thousand strong.

At Mareb horses are scarce, but among the Béni-Schiddad and Béni-Nauf, on the contrary, great numbers of them are raised, the original stock of which came from Nedjed.

These animals, which are so docile as to be managable with a single halter, are never shod. Horses seldom are, however, in any part of Arabia or of Africa, except in stony districts.

I observed this morning that our camel-drivers procured water by digging in the sand, near the edge of the dry water-course, a hole about two feet deep, which immediately filled with water. The same means are resorted to in most parts of this country, except in the neighborhood of the seas of sand, on which account the Arabs believe in the existence of a subterranean river.

The costume of the little boys and girls of these mountains is remarkable for its simplicity, consisting, in fact, of nothing. That of the grown-up women, however, is somewhat more elegant, draped, as they are, in the universal *pagne*, or mantle. They all wear bracelets on the wrists and korralis on the ankles. Two collars are worn on the neck, one of them a ring of iron, the other a light chain, to which is suspended an amulet, falling to the girdle, which is a strap of leather or cloth, drawn tightly around the waist. These girdles are adorned with little rings, overlapping like the scales of a fish, and with small chains which hang from them over the hips.

On leaving this halting-place, our route still lay through narrow passes and over steep mountains, the ascent of which is formed into a kind of staircase covered with large flags, up which our animals traveled with much ease. This roadway has been made by the labor of passing caravans, contributed from time to time, to prevent the ravages caused by the torrents in the rainy season, by which it would long since have been rendered impassable if unprotected by such pavement.

About half-past nine o'clock to-night, distant growlings of thunder were heard, soon followed by a deluge of rain, which lasted till near midnight, soon after which the barking of dogs announced our approach to a douar, the fires of which were still alight. In approaching this encampment, we turned the flank of it so as not to expose ourselves to danger by halting opposite the doors of the tents.

It was the douar of a wealthy nomad tribe, as we could

tell from the number of sheep, goats, camels and asses grouped around it. Roused from their sleep by our approach, these wandering people stood upon the defensive, while one of their number advanced to reconnoiter. We sent one of our chouafs to meet him, after some parley with whom, conducted with all the formalities of war, we were invited to approach—an arrangement to which the dogs, by their snarling, seemed to object.

We found all the inhabitants of the douar on the alert, men, women and children. The women made our camels kneel, and the chiefs received us as we dismounted, inviting us to warm ourselves by their fires, for we were quite benumbed by the cold, night rain. These people rivaled each other in their kind offices toward us. The little children thronged round to light our chiboques; the women spread mats and sheep-skins on the floor for us, and brought assida, prepared by them with ready skill; the men assisted our camel-drivers in shifting and arranging the loads of their animals.

As soon as we were warmed and refreshed, and about to continue our route, some of the chiefs invited us to remain with them for a while longer, saying that the caravan might trade advantageously with the tribe, which had need of many things.

While Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni was considering the matter, a naïb whispered to him that several armed men of the tribe had gone forward in the direction of our route.

“Wherefore,” asked he then of the chiefs, “do you thus lay snares for us?”

“The tribes lay not snares for travelers, as you know. You have no treaty with us, but we will make one with you that you may have nothing to complain of.”

“But you have sent your warriors forward to waylay us on the route.”

“If you wish not to trade with us, you treat us as ene-

mies, in which case we call upon you for the tribute which we have a right to exact."

The réis, suspecting that commercial transactions with people like these would have no very brilliant results, decided that it would be best for us to pay ransom with a good grace. For this purpose, contributions were levied upon the members of the caravan, and the proceeds handed to our hosts, in return for their hospitality, after which we were suffered to depart in peace.

At daylight, leaving to our left the mountains and gorges through which we had hitherto wound our way, we entered upon an immense plain of sand, which stretched away before us, and to the right, further than the eye could reach—a hopeless expanse of dreary waste. About half-past seven o'clock we encamped on this plain, near the site of three wells hidden beneath the sand and known only to caravans traveling upon this route.

This was about thirty leagues and a half from Mareb, nearly a third of the distance from that place to Doân, supposing we had proceeded in a straight line. But the route generally followed by caravans is thirty-one leagues longer, in consequence of the turns to be taken to avoid the seas of sand. We had now arrived at the end of our fourth stage from Mareb and twelfth from Sana.

During our halt with the nomad tribe just encountered by us, I had not seen Hamza, upon whom I now went to call, being anxious to know the result of his visit to Ibn-Ali. I found him quite as eager to tell me—coming to seek me, in fact, so that we met half way between our tents, when I returned with him to mine, at his particular request. Although surprised that he should thus have left his wife alone, I did not make any remark on the subject, not wishing to become an object of suspicion to him. Our chibouques lighted, and coffee served in my tent, Hamza opened the conversation, saying:

"I want to tell you what passed between me and Ibn-Ali.

He asked me whether I had reason to be satisfied with my wife; to which I replied that I had nothing to say about her except in praise; expressing, also, my surprise at his question: upon which he said—‘sometimes a man has cause for unhappiness in the fear that his affection is not fully returned.’

“On my again appearing surprised, he added, ‘Do not be surprised at my questions. If your heart is racked by doubts, be they well founded or otherwise, if you suspect that your wife’s thoughts are not of you and for you alone, I have the means of rendering you the happiest of men.’

“I asked him how this could be, on which he said :

“‘I have a ruby which possesses a wonderful power. For a long time it was worn by many of the favorite sultanas; but the last who possessed it gave it, when on her death-bed, to a slave, with directions to throw it into the sea, or bury it in the earth, fearing lest another might be loved as she had been—for it is the property of that gem to secure to its possessor an absolute power over the loved one. It is a treasure, a talisman, the existence of which I have not hitherto dared to hint at to any person, fearing lest my life might be sacrificed by one desirous to obtain it. This journey has been undertaken by me solely for the purpose of disposing of my wonderful ruby, which I now offer to you, because I know you can afford to give me a good price for it, and think it may be to your advantage to make it your own.’”

“Depend upon it, that man is a knave,” said I to Hamza.

“Not so,” replied he, “he showed me the ruby, which has magical characters graven upon its facets. I told him, however, that I would consult you before making a bargain with him.”

“In talking with you about this man before,” said I, “I told you plainly that I had a bad opinion of him. His object now is to find his way to your purse by working upon

your credulity—he is a thief, not a sorcerer, with whom you have to deal. Prowling about the caravan, according to his custom, he remarked, as he told me, the jealous care with which you guard your wife, offering me, at the same time, a rich present if I would put him in the way of making your acquaintance. This I declined, and he has now taken other means to make you his dupe.”

“You would not advise me to buy his ruby, then?” said Hamza.

“Certainly not,” replied I; “but as it is safest for a man to make as few enemies as possible, you need not tell him that I have dissuaded you. Tell him only that you will have nothing to do with his precious talisman.”

As Hamza took leave of me, I could see from his manner that he was disappointed because I had not counseled him to buy the wonderful ruby. I told him that I would obtain such other information respecting Ibn-Ali as would enable us to arrive at a just estimate of his character, and he returned to his tent.

CHAPTER XX.

WE LOSE A CAMEL.—A TRIBE OF GIPSIES.

At sunset, on Thursday, the seventeenth of August, tents were struck and camels loaded, and we set out upon our fifteenth stage.

About eight o'clock, I descried in the distance two misty forms advancing toward us, which my companions at once made out to be two Bedouins, mounted upon dromedaries—for these Arabs are gifted with extraordinary powers of sight and hearing.

General Daumas, in his work entitled *The Sahara of*

Algiers, repeats some assertions made to him by an Arab, which, although full of exaggeration, give an idea of the quickness of sense displayed by these people, who rival, in that respect, the aborigines of North America, so graphically described by Cooper.

"I am considered," said this Arab, "as rather near-sighted.

"Yet I can distinguish a sheep from a goat at a distance of a day's journey.

"I know a man who can smell the smoke of a pipe, or of meat cooking, at a distance of thirty leagues in the desert.

"We recognize each other by our tracks in the sand; and when a stranger crosses our country, we know it by his foot-marks, for no one tribe walks like another.

"We can tell by the track of a hare whether it is a male or a female—and if the latter, whether it is with young.

"By looking at a date-stone, we can tell the tree on which the fruit grew."

As the Bedouins approached us, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, followed by two chaousses, went forward to reconnoiter, returning in a few minutes, and advising us to march in regular order until the strangers came up. I asked him how he knew that they were not Arabs of this country.

"The gait of their dromedaries is different from that of ours," replied he; "the animals show signs of distress, too, as though they had come a long way."

"They are Bedouins of the Hedjaz," said a young camel-driver.

"Silence, fool!" replied the réis; "because my beard is grizzled, do you suppose my eyes are not as good as yours? Talk when you know a goat from a camel. These men are from Nedjed, and they are mounted upon dromedaries of the Soudan."

The strangers now rode up, saying, "May Allah keep you in the right road!"

"And may the Omnipotent accord unto you the like mercy, my brothers," responded the réis; "your dromedaries appear to be much fatigued?"

"They are young beasts from the Soudan," said one of the strangers, "and not yet accustomed to long journeys."

The réis cast a side glance at the young camel-driver, who bowed down his head in acknowledgment of his inferiority.

"Can you tell me whether the Imaum is at Sana?" asked the Bedouin.

"I believe you will find him there," replied the réis.

"Good! We come from Derreyêh, carrying dispatches to him of the greatest importance."

"Open-mouthed couriers these!" growled a veteran camel-driver.

"You care but little about keeping your secrets, it seems," remarked one of the naïbs; "men do not generally talk out like that about secret service confided to them—Bedouins above all. I believe not your story."

"Ay, ay," said the veteran camel-driver; "I will bet that they are spies looking out for what is going on in the Nedjid."

"Silence!" cried the réis; "Allah preserve us from suspecting men whose intentions may be good—better be the dupe of a knave than hurt an honest man."

Then turning to the strangers he asked how long it was since they had left Derreyêh.

"Thirty-five days," was the reply.

"Ha! good traveling that," remarked the réis. "If you have need of water or provisions, ask and you shall have them."

"Fill this zem-zemïe for us, then," said the Bedouins, "it will last us as far as Kousen. May Allah grant unto you the like help in your hour of need! The Arab that is hospitable is like unto the well dug by Providence in the desert."

We complied with their request, and parted from them with mutual benedictions.

Now, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni knew a dromedary of the Sou-dan when he saw one. He had also determined, from a great distance, that the animals ridden by the strangers were young, and that they had traveled a long way; but his discernment and experience were far more fallible when he undertook to judge of men—for, seven or eight minutes after the departure of the Bedouins, a chausse came running to tell him that a camel laden with provisions was missing.

Orders to halt were immediately given, when it was found that the third section was short of its animals by one camel. The other sections were examined to see whether it had straggled into any of them, but they all had their full complement.

On a close examination of the third section, it appeared that the palm-leaf cord by which the camels were strung together had been cut with an exceedingly sharp instrument. This settled the question. The camel had been stolen by the two Bedouins—yet these men had not dismounted from their dromedaries, nor had they a third animal with them when they left.

Some chaousses, dispatched by the réis in every direction, soon returned, reporting that they had discovered three men making-off in the distance, two of whom they recognized as our Bedouins.

On the naïbs asking whether they might follow in pursuit, the réis said: "We might readily catch the robbers, to be sure, for their animals (stolen probably from couriers of Derreyêh assassinated by them) were tired out. But the chances are that these men are not alone, but are waited for by the rest of the band, and that not far from here."

"Let us follow them in full force," suggested a naïb.

"Then there would be a battle to fight," said the réis,

"time lost, and perhaps some of our party killed, which would not mend the loss of the stolen beast. Let the matter rest, then, and keep a better look out in future."

When we had resumed our journey I asked the réis to explain how the theft had been effected.

"I lost a camel in that way before," replied he, "and I can tell you that few things are more remarkable than the address displayed by these vagabonds in accomplishing their purpose.

"They rarely go in numbers sufficient to attack openly a caravan like ours with any chance of success, but they often manage to lay hands, by stealth, on such property belonging to it as comes within their reach. Those among them who exhibit ingenuity and address in devising stratagems for this purpose are looked upon quite as heroes by their companions, who treat them with great consideration and respect.

"Their mode of executing the *ruse* by which we have just been deceived, is for three of them to advance together to meet the caravan—two mounted upon dromedaries, the third on foot. The latter is clothed in a garment of some dark color, so as to be hardly distinguishable by night. While the riders draw near the caravan, he remains behind, lying flat upon the sand, until he perceives the members of the caravan engaged in conversation with his comrades. Then he glides along upon his hands and knees, advances stealthily upon the group of camels having the fewest people near it, and cuts the line-cord of one with a very sharp knife.

"The camel once freed in this way, he throws over it a large coverlet, of the same color as his garments, and leads it quietly away. It is a hazardous game, he who tries it sometimes losing his life, often his booty. But they generally succeed—for this is not the first time I have been a loser by them."

"And how do they steal horses?" asked I.

"The theft of horses," replied the réis, "is executed nearly after the same method, except in the case of a douar, when robbers select the last night of the month for their purpose, so that the moonlight may not interfere with them.

"They travel during the day, until they approach the neighborhood of the tribe they have planned to rob, when they advance by night, only ; ambuscading in a dry water course, or in some thicket, within a league or two of the tents. When night has fallen, dark and still, they creep out from their place of concealment, snuff round the douars one after another, and stop before the one where men and dogs appear to be least wakeful. Two of the most crafty and daring of the band now creep within the circle of the tents, while the others remain silent and motionless at some distance. If the dogs are troublesome, a third robber—called the *zahher*—follows to the douar, and manages to distract their attention while his two comrades are at work. These latter fix upon some particular tent for their practice, one of them, called the *khrafir*, acting as sentry, while the other—the *sarecker*, or lifter—steals in among the horses and dromedaries.

When the animal is fastened by a simple cord or thong, the *sarecker* unties it, and moves off with his booty in a direction away from where the *zahher* is keeping the dogs at bay. If the horse is fettered, he slides the rings up to the animal's knees, where he fastens them with a string, enabling him to move with short steps, and removing the fetters altogether, when he has got to a safe distance, either with a saw or by picking the padlock adroitly with a horse-hair loop. In some cases, he adjusts the lock so as to have it clear of the horse's legs, and blows it to pieces with a pistol shot. This wakes up the people of the douar, however, who are soon out in pursuit of the robbers, now joined by the rest of the band. But the darkness of the night favors the marauders, who generally escape with their plunder."

"And how do the sheep-stealers manage?"

"Sheep-stealing is an uncertain business, owing to the difficulty in getting the animals quickly away. When the flocks are pasturing at a distance from the douar, the robbers sometimes drive them off in the early morning, tying and gagging the shepherd, whom they carry off with them, and release at night, when they have got to a safe distance. The flocks are driven off in detachments, by the least frequented routes, to some place of rendezvous previously agreed upon."

"Europeans never suppose that such things happen in the desert," said I; "they look upon it as nothing but a boundless tract of arid waste, covered with burning sand, where one meets neither man, nor beast, nor bird, nor reptile, nor vegetation of any kind—where nothing can live, in fact."

"There are regions like that," said the réis; "you may see enough of them yet before you get to the end of this journey."

"Perhaps—but our people think that all the deserts are alike. They believe that a caravan, from the beginning to the end of its journey, traverses one changeless and monotonous plain, where there is nothing to be dreaded, save thirst and tempest: and that, although lions, panthers, and serpents may be encountered in some rare oasis, there can be no danger of falling in with thieves, robbers, or cut-throats, such as flourish in great cities."

"My life has been passed in traveling," said the réis, "and I have ever observed that whithersoever man wanders he is sure to encounter man."

During the remainder of this night, our route lay over ground very much cut up by torrents which come down from the mountains with mighty force in the rainy season, rolling before them great blocks of stone.

About midnight we came upon a tribe of Gipsies, who, without tents or shelter of any kind, lay grouped about large fires, with a number of half-starved animals which car-

ried their baggage. These people, like those of their race in our countries, make a living by telling fortunes, playing upon musical instruments, exhibiting feats of strength, selling love-charms, weaving mats, and carving articles out of wood. They also thieve, with great adroitness, when the opportunity offers. Indeed it is probably from them that we derive the proverb—"The opportunity makes the thief."

Some of the women were magnificent creatures, although clad in rags and infested with vermin.

These Gipsies are very numerous in Arabia, Persia, Abyssinia, and Turkey. In Wallachia, especially, the women are said to be endowed with remarkable beauty, of which their husbands, little scrupulous regarding marriage vows, avail themselves to obtain money or privileges from the boyards, displaying in their intrigues great diplomatic skill.

Nearly all the documentary evidence regarding the origin of this race points to it as having¹ come from India, a supposition corroborated by the fact of their language containing a great number of Sanscrit words. But the question is, from which of the Eastern nations are they descended, and at what epoch, and under what circumstances did their emigration take place?—matters that have ever been shrouded in the deepest mystery. However this may be, I will here recount a portion of the legends and traditions current on this subject in Persia and Arabia—not that I think, however, that they throw much light upon the oriental history of these vagrants, who, wherever found, have neither truth nor law among them; nor is there in their *ghiftas*, or peculiar jargon, a word to express Deity—a name graven upon all the objects of creation. Barbarians, now, in spite of every effort to reclaim them, they have preserved to the present day their original customs, subtlety, and craft. Everywhere they wear a garb peculiar to themselves; everywhere they are shunned and mistrusted by other races.

We are told in some of the legends concerning them that :

“At the request of Bahram-Gur, King of Persia, who reigned from 420 to 440, Shankal, King of Khanodjé, sent to that prince ten thousand Luris, Gipsies, players upon instruments of music.

“For Bahram had written to the wise men of every province of his dominions to inquire of them respecting the poor and afflicted thereof.

“The nobles, rich people, and merchants, testified that the country was prosperous, and that words of gratitude toward the sovereign were everywhere to be heard.

“But the peasants, laborers, and poor people, complained of the hardness of the times. They said that the nobles, the rich, and the great merchants, lived sumptuously, quaffed wine, and wreathed garlands about their brows—and that to the sound of music, without thinking of the poor, who had none of these things.

“Bahram was touched by these complaints. He commenced a reform by ameliorating the condition of the poor. Then, that they might not suffer any kind of privation, he sent an ambassador to Shankal, King of Khanodjé, with this message :

““O Prince, renowned for justice !

““In my dominions the poor are obliged to dine without music, a circumstance of which I do not approve.

““Choose, then, ten thousand of thy Luris, men and women, who play upon the lute, and send them unto me.’

“And the Luris were sent to Bahram, who assigned private residences to them in different parts of his empire, bestowing on each of them a cow and an ass.

“He commanded them to elect a chief for each village, and sent a thousand loads of wheat to the most deserving among them, in order that they might sow and gather when the time came, and be able to perform their music gratuitously to his poor subjects,

“At first the Luris appeared satisfied with the gifts given to them ; but they wasted recklessly their wheat, leaving their cows and asses to perish when the hard season came.

“Bahram reprimanded them for the wasteful manner in which they had used the grain, without troubling themselves to harvest a single ear.

“He then dismissed them, with orders to pack all their effects and property upon asses, and to wander henceforth throughout the country, making a living by singing, and playing upon their instruments of music, for the entertainment of rich and poor.

“And the Luris, in obedience to this order, are still vagrants throughout the world, consorting with dogs and wolves, and robbing upon the highways by day and by night.”

There is another edition of this legend, which runs as follows:

“Bahram, wishing that all his people might enjoy themselves during his reign, issued orders that the men should work only during the first half of the day, after which they were to abandon themselves to festivities, drink, and song, with musicians, dancers, and mountebanks.

“By and by, the musicians, dancers, and mountebanks raised their prices so that the regular allowance to each band of buffoons was no less than one hundred *drachmas* (80 francs).

“One day, King Bahram, seeing some men who drank without music, said to them :

“‘Have I not forbidden you to neglect music and other entertainments of whatsoever kind ?’

“And the men, prostrating themselves before him, answered :

“‘We sought for music, and would willingly have paid more than one hundred drachmas for it, but it was not to be had, even at that price.’

“Then Bahram, calling for ink and for satin paper, wrote

to the King of the Indies, requesting him to send musicians.

“And twelve thousand were sent to him by the king, and they were distributed through all the towns of the empire, where they multiplied.

“Their descendants dwell there still, but their numbers are diminished, many of them having dispersed themselves, generation after generation, over other kingdoms, and even into the remotest lands.

“They are called Zaths.”

We halted near these Gipsy vagrants for a short time—eye upon baggage, hand upon—cimeter.

CHAPTER XXI.

BIR-EL-R'ZEL.—INTERCESSION.—IBN-ALI, THE MERCHANT.—HUNTING THE GAZELLE.

IN the gray of the morning, soon after leaving the Gipsy gang, we put up some gazelles, which bounded away with great swiftness, but lost some of their number, nevertheless, by our bullets, which we sent whistling among them as we urged our dromedaries to their utmost speed.

The place now selected by us for our encampment was a circular plain, shut out from the horizon by a barrier of mountains. On this plain there is a solitary well, called Bir-el-R'zel, or the Well of the Gazelle, from the number of these animals herding in the vicinity of it. Like the other wells hitherto halted at by us, it is simply a pit rudely excavated in the sand, to a depth of about twenty feet. The gazelles are attracted hither by the plentiful supply of water, which is good for drinking, but unfit for use with soap, and for cooking.

The instinct of the gazelle for water is so well known to the Bedouin that, when traversing a strange region, he follows the track of the animal to seek for water, which he seldom fails of finding by this expedient.

In the neighborhood of Bir-el-R'zel, I remarked a peculiar variety of cherry-laurel, the fruit of which, larger than that of the European kind, is flattened upon the upper surface. The leaves and twigs of this shrub are intensely bitter to the taste. I also observed the *clematis erecta* of Linnæus, twining itself about the mimosas.

The sand with which the ground near the well is covered would seem, from its color, to contain sulphate of ocher—an element, however, not to be detected in its taste.

By eight o'clock this morning we had pitched our tents, which, by the by, I have not yet described. They consist, in general, of large pieces of camel-hair cloth, upheld in the center by a tent-pole from ten to twelve feet high. Twelve cords, attached to the *tousluc*, or tent-cloth, and fastened to pegs, prevent it from being lifted up by the wind, which often blows with great fury in this part of Arabia. These tents, called *kemâa* in the Arabic, are divisible in two, so as to pack readily upon camels.

The tents pitched, fires were lighted, and breakfast was prepared.

In districts destitute of trees and brushwood, the Arabs use dry camel-dung for fuel, gathering it along the route, and carrying it with them in palm-leaf baskets.

Nine o'clock was now at hand, and, as I had eaten nothing since the day before, I was not sorry when Mohammed, who was our cook, brought in breakfast upon a *sanie*—an article so convenient for travelers that I will describe it. It consists of a circular piece of leather, about two feet in diameter, with rings sewn all round the edge, through which a thong is passed. When spread out flat, it serves for a table. By drawing the string it is converted into a bag, in which light

articles of provision may be carried at the saddle-bow, in company with the zem-zemïe.

“Of all the circumstances in life, where eating counts for anything,” says Brillat-Savarin, “undoubtedly one of the most agreeable is the recess from the chase. It is the only kind of interlude, indeed, that can be protracted without producing *ennui*.”

And so it is with every halt after a long journey ; but nowhere have I tested it so well as in these deserts of Arabia, in which the pleasantest time is that passed under the tent.

After the siesta to-day, Selim came to tell me that one of our naïbs, and some chaousses, desired to speak with me. There were five of them, for whom the naïb spoke, saying :

“It was I who had charge of the third section, from which the camel was stolen; and, according to our rules, the loss must be made good by me. These men were specially appointed by me to guard the baggage of that section, which gives me a right to look to them for the value of the camel, and to inflict bodily chastisement upon them if they are unable to pay. Now, the price of a camel, with its load, is more than these poor men can raise among them ; nor would the infliction of punishment upon them mend the matter. Under these circumstances, the members of the caravan have offered to subscribe for the relief of the chaousses, but the réis, insisting that a fault has been committed, will not allow this. He says that the lost camel must be paid for either by the naïb or the chaousses, by way of punishment for their negligence.”

On my asking the naïb what I could do for him, he continued :

“Your tent is next to that of the réis, who has much respect for you ; and we come to ask your intercession with him that the offer made by the members of the caravan may be accepted.”

I promised to exert my influence in their favor ; and just then the réis entered my tent.

"What do you here?" asked he, in a sharp tone, addressing the naïb and his men.

"We have come to entreat the Hadji to intercede with you in our favor," replied the naïb.

"Away with you !" exclaimed the réis, in a stern voice : "this is a step which I will not permit you to take."

The naïb and his men bowed their heads, and went out from the tent.

"You are severe," said I to the réis, when they were out of hearing.

"To command obedience," replied he, "one must be just, but inflexible. When I say a thing, I stand by it; and I have said that either the naïb must pay for the stolen camel or else must the chaousses."

"But you did not, in the first instance, forbid the travelers from subscribing for the relief of these men. What is said is said. We will make up the value of the camel, and you cannot decline to receive it."

On this the réis considered for a moment, and then, as if speaking to himself, said : "He who yields judiciously augments his authority instead of diminishing it." Then, turning to me, he continued, "You are in the right. I did not, in the first place, forbid the travelers from coming to the relief of these men ; but the next time a camel is lost I will inflict twenty-five blows of a courbash on every chaousse to blame, and then we shall see whether anybody will offer to take his place."

Just as I had gained the cause of these poor people, Hamza, on whom I had not lately called, came in, upon which the réis was about to retire, but I requested him to remain and take coffee with us—for I wished to question him, before Hamza, about the merchant, Ibn-Ali.

When the steam of the mocha and the spiral smoke of

the chiboques began to ascend, I asked the réis to tell us what he knew of Ibn-Ali.

"I will bet that you are suspicious of him," said he, "and you have reason to be, for he has a bad reputation in Mareb, where they even believe him to be an accomplice of the robbers and Gipsy vagabonds of the desert, receiving their stolen goods, which he obtains from them at very low prices—a branch of trade to which they attribute his wealth."

"What do you think of that?" asked I of Hamza.

"I believe you were right," replied he.

"This Ibn-Ali, besides," continued the réis, "is a man of debauched habits. He has got into more than one difficulty by his intrigues with women—and I should not wonder if his present journey has been undertaken to escape the consequences of a scrape of that kind."

It appeared that this Ibn-Ali was a combination of Cartouche and Lovelace. I told the réis of his having offered to sell a talisman to Hamza, desiring the latter to recount all the circumstances.

"It is generally to the women that he offers these talismans, to acquire influence over them," said the réis, when he had heard Hamza's story; "but in this instance, unable to obtain an interview with the wife, he addressed himself to the husband."

At this stage of our conversation, we heard the sound of many voices at some distance, upon asking Selim the meaning of which, he told us that some of our party, who had been hunting gazelles, were returning to the encampment with their trophies. The gazelles now brought in, as well as those shot during the night, were cut up, and the joints divided among all the people of the caravan.

The Arabs recognize three varieties of this animal; the *ledmi*, or great gazelle, the *sin*, or little gazelle, and the *rim*, one of a size intermediate between those two. They go in herds of from four to one hundred—though some-

times as many as two or three hundred have been seen together, looking, at a distance, like the flock of some nomad tribe on the move.

When a caravan halts in a gazelle district, the hunters of the party go out in force, taking care to walk *up* the wind—for the sense of smell of this animal is remarkably acute, and the least suspicion of mankind, tainting the breeze, causes it to turn and fly. In stalking his game, the hunter glides cautiously from bush to bush, imitating now and then the cry of the gazelle, which stops on hearing it, and gazes curiously around for its lost companion, while the hunter easily approaches within close gun-shot.

At the report of the gun, the herd bounds away, stopping again at the distance of a league or so, where they commence browsing, appearing to have forgotten their alarm. The hunter again stalks them as before, continuing his pursuit until he has killed as many as he wants.

There are two other methods of hunting the gazelle; with the *thair-el-hoor*, or falcon, and the *slougui*, or grayhound. These methods, however, especially the former, are seldom practiced, except by persons of rank.

A falcon that can strike down a little gazelle is valued at a dromedary. A grayhound that can pull down a middle-sized gazelle is worth a good she-camel; and one that can catch a *ledmi*, or great gazelle, will exchange for a blood horse. They are broken in early to the chase; and if they do not show an aptitude for it before the age of two years, they will never be fit for any thing.

The gazelle brings forth twice a year.

It is remarkable for the brilliancy of its eyes: hence, *Andick aïnin-el-r'zel ia bella*—"You have the eyes of a gazelle"—is the finest compliment that an Arab can pay to his lady-love. The horns, pared thin and mounted in gold, silver, or copper, are used for applying *koh'ol* to the eyes; and the skin, carefully dressed, is made into satchels, in which articles of value are kept.

To-night I supped upon gazelle venison—a game dish by no means to be despised.

CHAPTER XXII.

DEATH OF A LION.—KIËF.

Soon after leaving Bir-el-R'zel, on the evening of Friday, the eighteenth of August, we found the plain gradually ascending—the road covered in some places with great cobblestones, in others with a fine, light sand. The carcasses of camels, mangled by the wild beasts with which these regions abound, plainly indicated that our route was the one usually followed by caravans.

As we skirted the mimosas, I gathered lumps of the gum distilled by them; not without getting my hands wounded by the thorns, however, which bristled out as if to defend the trees against my rapacity.

Besides mimosas, I observed cypress pines; asclepias with thick leaves and green fruit as large as oranges; stramoniums; yellow-flowering cactus; mint of peculiarly strong perfume, and henbane.

We soon came to a very steep and rugged mountain, up which our camels went with a good will, to the cheering song of the djemêls—the long line of animals, with their packs and riders, lending animation to the scene, of which it had previously been sadly destitute. Arrived at the top, we found ourselves upon the edge of a vast basin surrounded by mountains, the heavy mists lying upon the valley producing a brief illusion of Swiss lake scenery.

There is something terribly gloomy and solemn in the aspect of nature among these mountains, which are blocked out of the solid rock, with hardly a crevice in them for the

struggling growth of the few meager, prickly plants observed by us. The skeleton ribs of these rocks are tinted with a dusky hue, running into a lurid red—the desolation of the whole scene calling to mind the savage solitudes of Palestine.

Again, our road wound over a smooth surface, furrowed here and there by ravines and shallow water-courses, and so pleasant for traveling upon that the chouafs made their donkeys prance and curvet before us like noble steeds. These donkeys, let me remark, are spirited animals, with eyes full of fire, ears well set, and heads well up: in strength and agility, also, they are far superior to those of France.

The chaousses jogged along upon the flanks of the line, at their steady, uniform pace; while the djemêls doled forth ceaselessly their monotonous chant, solemn as a funeral dirge; and the réis with his two lieutenants, gravely seated upon their stately dromedaries, looked as dignified as Spanish monks assisting at some grand procession. The khrodja, the iman, the muezzin, and the dellal followed humbly, mounted upon inferior animals; and the long line of camels, moving steadily on to the sound of the bells suspended from the necks of the file leaders, looked like a great flotilla of pirogues, with the heads of dromedaries carved upon their prows.

We now entered a tract of what in India is called jungle, in which there grew mimosas of all kinds, and many varieties of the turpentine tree. Passing through this, we came to a thicket so close and tangled that our dromedaries had great difficulty in making their way through it: emerging from which, soon after midnight, we found ourselves on a vast plain, fringed to the right and left by jungles, in which lions make their lairs—a circumstance, however, which did not prevent us from halting there.

Having kindled great fires, to keep these terrible neighbors at a distance, we placed the dromedaries, kneeling, within our circle, every man holding himself in readiness to

face the enemy should he pay us a visit. After these precautions we proceeded to take some hasty refreshments, but had hardly swallowed a mouthful when we perceived some jackals prowling around us.

"Just what I expected!" cried Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, "the lions are not far off, for these are their scouts. Let every man be on the alert!"

He had hardly spoken when a bellowing was heard to our right, as if in retort to his words. Each man grasped his weapon and faced in the direction from which the sound came. Some minutes were thus passed in suspense, when at length we saw, by the light of our fires, a lion of enormous size advancing toward us with a slow, majestic step. He stopped when within gun-shot, glaring upon us with eyes like two burning coals, as if to measure our strength. Then, thinking us too many for him, perhaps, he uttered a smothered roar, and was about to retire in the dignified manner in which he came, when I sent a bullet after him.

I saw him stagger, but it was only for a moment. Then, turning again toward us, he gave a roar so fearful that it made every one in the caravan shudder. There are few sounds so awful as the roar of the lion, which seems to make one's very anatomy shake and quiver.

These animals have a singular instinct for detecting the person by whom they have been wounded—an instinct displayed in the present instance; for, although the lion was quite fifty paces distant, I felt the yellow glare of his eyes fixed upon me with an intensity that I could hardly endure. It was evident that he had picked me out as his victim; and now all my coolness and resolution must be brought into play. Throwing down my gun, then, I seized the sword of the man next me, and prepared myself for the combat in the Arab manner.

But at this moment one of our party, an Arab, and one well accustomed to this kind of danger, dashed forward on

his dromedary and came upon the lion before he could make a spring, but just as the dromedary reared up on reaching him the savage beast bounded upon the animal, driving his claws deeply into its chest, and lion and dromedary rolled to the ground together.

The Arab, however, had already struck the lion a powerful blow over the head with his sabre, bringing the blood, which half blinded the brute as it flowed from the gash. Then, leaping to the ground as his dromedary fell, he dealt another well-directed blow by which he ham-strung his enemy, and sent him rolling over on the ground howling with pain; while another Arab, driving a lance into him as he plunged about, put an end to his life.

All this took place in less time than I have taken to relate it. The Arab escaped without a scratch, but his dromedary died of the wounds inflicted on it by the lion. Both of the animals were skinned on the spot, and their flesh was divided among the people of the caravan.

The skin of the lion fell to the share of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, but he made it over to me, as I was the first to wound the animal.

"Take it," said he, as he presented the gift; "take it and preserve it with care. You were the first to attack the lion, and his hide is yours by right. Were it not so, however, I should have given it to you as a charm against the evil eye, for I promised the Imaum of Sana that I would watch over you."

I took no particular pains on this occasion to argue the réis out of his superstition, feigning rather to partake of it, as I accepted his gift with thanks.

The Arabs believe that it is good to sleep on the skin of a lion, to which they attribute the property of scaring away the evil spirit, as well as of curing several maladies. The claws of the lion, mounted in silver or copper, are used as ornaments by the women—while the scalp of the animal is worn on the head by some warriors, in the belief that

courage and energy are thereby communicated to the brain.

At three o'clock we resumed our journey, passing, before we had gone far, a strong caravan coming from Olù-Yaseb, which we hailed—for caravans in the desert hail each other like ships at sea. We exchanged news with them, and learned that they were bound for Mareb, from whence we were coming. The manner in which this caravan was composed and organized gave rise to some remark among us, the camels and dromedaries being quite disproportioned to the number of people. The animals were equal in force probably to ours, while the whole company did not exceed fifty souls.

The réis appeared to have no assistants—neither naïbs, chaousses, nor chouafs; upon asking the reason of which he related the following story:

Among their company was a merchant, who had with him a great quantity of *kiêf**—an article the use of which is forbidden to the people of caravans traveling in the desert, more especially to those acting as officers under the réis. For its effects are far more dangerous and deplorable than those of the most intoxicating drinks.

But it is not to caravans only that *kiêf* is forbidden; it is interdicted, generally, by the Koran, which enjoins abstinence from all drugs and drinks by which intoxication is produced.

Taken in infinitesimal doses, *kiêf* produces the most delightful sensations, ecstasies that possess themselves of body and mind, transporting him who uses it into worlds of de-

* Called also *k'nab*, and *hascheesh*—whence *hascheeshin*, the origin of our *assassin*. It is made from the *cannabis Indica*, or Indian hemp, either by kneading the leaves of the plant, previously boiled in sweetened water, into a paste from which the pastils are made, or by pounding the tops of the shoots, and mixing the paste with melted butter or warm honey. There are many other ways of preparing it, but these are the most common.

light far above those of any imagined paradise built up in dreams by persons in their normal state.

But, on the least excess over the dose by which such frame of mind is produced, the images that arise before him who uses kiëf are of a far different character. Instead of fairies and houries, demons and monsters are conjured up. Instead of palaces and enchanted gardens, caverns gape before him—dungeons, the floors of which are paved with human remains. Endless hallucinations, all based upon dangers and horrors, succeed each other, while the victim, driven to madness, rushes about, destroying everything within his grasp, and wounding or killing all who oppose him, until exhaustion or death puts an end to his frenzy.

Nevertheless, many Arabs are more passionately addicted to the use of this drug than drunkards to that of ardent spirits. Add to this the zest that always accompanies prohibition, and one can form an idea of the eagerness with which the merchant above referred to was importuned to sell his forbidden fruit.

It would be needless to say that he allowed himself to be moved by those entreaties. The opportunity was too good to be lost—and the keen trader availed himself of it by disposing of the coveted article for its weight in gold.

At last, it came to pass one day that the consumers of kiëf had indulged in a greater quantity of it than usual, when, as chance would have it, the caravan fell in with a nomad and warlike tribe.

While a conference was going on with the chief men of these people, seven or eight members of the caravan, imagining that they saw bloody lances brandished before them, rushed upon the tribe with frantic yells, and felled several of them to the ground. Hereupon one wild cry arose from men, women, and children, in the nomad camp, and in an instant the caravan was hemmed in on all sides. The réis, the naïbs, the chaousses, and the chouafs, did their duty, by seeking to appease the fury of the insulted tribe, and

protecting, so far as in their power, those of whom they had charge; but the two naïbs were soon killed, with all the chaousses and chouafs, except three or four—and the whole caravan, surrounded unawares, must have been cut off, had not some of the women belonging to it waved branches of trees over their heads, as a signal for truce.

Upon this, the tribe, according to the usage in these countries, suspended hostilities, but not until about three-fourths of the caravan had bitten the dust, while none of the victors had fallen except those struck down in the beginning of the fray.

The réis now advanced to confer with one of the tribe appointed to meet him, to whom he said:

“Brother, the Evil Spirit has thus armed us, one against the other, when no hostility existed between us. To propitiate Allah, then, who delights not in the slaughter of his children, let him who first fell under the spells of the power of darkness ask pardon of his brother, and let pardon be granted unto him.”

“Not so,” rejoined the spokesman of the tribe, “we were attacked, and we only defended ourselves. You shall die, to the last among you, unless you explain the cause of this foul treachery, and deliver unto us the perpetrators of it.”

“Give me an hour to consider,” said the réis, “and, if possible, it shall be done according to your request, which is but just.”

It was known in the caravan that the merchant who had the kiêf used to sell it clandestinely to all who were able to pay the enormous price demanded by him for it. The réis, therefore, calling around him the remnant of the company, said to this man:

“It is you who, by your greediness for gain, have caused the ruin and desolation of my caravan; follow me for such judgment as may be passed upon you. And you, too,” added he, addressing the three survivors of those who had

indulged in the accursed drug, "you, too, must submit to whatever punishment the outraged tribe may choose to inflict upon you, seeing that you have contributed to the disaster by which we have been smitten."

All the people of the caravan who were still able to move followed the réis and the four culprits to the camp of the tribe, where a council was in readiness to receive them. The réis related the circumstances of the case, adding, as he pointed to the merchant and the three kiêf-eaters, "Behold four expiatory victims, whom we offer to you in atonement for the blood spilt; to implore the mercy of Allah, for which, and your pardon, we prostrate ourselves with our faces in the dust."

The three kiêf-eaters were condemned to lose their heads—all property belonging to them in the caravan to be confiscated for the benefit of the tribe.

As for the vender of the fatal drug, the tribe demanded that he, too, should be delivered to them, which was done, his camels, dromedaries, and merchandise, being also given up to them. They cut off his ears and nose, put out his eyes, and then beheaded him.

In addition to this retribution, the decimated caravan was further obliged to make over to the tribe one-third of all the possessions belonging to it.

Having passed an hour and a half with these unfortunate travelers, some of whom still bore traces of the conflict, we took leave of them and resumed our route.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BELÈD-EL-WADI.—THE NAGIB SÉID-ABD'EL-RAHIM.—ROUND THE OASIS.—CUSTOMS OF THE WADITES.—COSTUME OF THE WOMEN.—ZOOLOGY, ETC., ETC.

ABOUT sunrise we approached a fertile valley—a cheering sight to travelers weary of toiling over barren mountains.

Like the valleys of Egypt, this one is covered with groves of fruit trees, and laid out in gardens and cultivated fields. It has its Nile, too—a water-course which collects the rain-waters of the region, running a distance of about twenty-four leagues, from north-west to south-east. The mountains to the north of it are low and but little broken; while those to the east are of sugar-loaf form, isolated and lofty. Through these latter winds the road to Kond, another oasis, lying fifteen leagues to the north.

Before us, to our right and to our left, were scattered some thirty villages, which, viewed from a distance, presented a most picturesque appearance. We encamped at the first of these, called Belèd-el-Wadi, which stands like a sentinel at the entrance of the valley.

We were now forty-two leagues from Mareb, forty from Bir-el-Naga, thirty-three and a half from Bir-el-Nassib, twenty-seven from Kousen and seven from Bir-el-R'zel.

Immediately upon our arrival, in accordance with the usage of the country, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni and I called upon the Nagib of the oasis; the former to settle with him about our alien dues, while I went merely as a visitor—a capacity in which I should probably have been compelled to appear, had I not gone of my own free will.

Séid-Abd'el-Rahim was the name of this Nagib, who inhabited a small fort hard by the water-course, mounted with some old iron guns nearly past service. The walls of this

fort, which is called Dâr-el-Nagîb, are partly of stone, partly of bricks burnt in the sun. It is two stories high, and has a terraced roof. The ground-floor is occupied by the guards, the second by the women, and the first by the Nagib himself, who keeps his armory there. At night, he sleeps upon the terrace, which is arboresced over, like that of his *confrère* at Mareb.

We found this chieftain seated at the entrance to his vestibule, lazily smoking a chicha, and attended by a dozen of his chief men, also smoking chichas, while they discussed the subject of the weather. These people retired at our approach—on which the Nagib rose up and came to meet us, inviting us to seats on either side of him.

He was a man past the middle age, but still strong and vigorous. His dark, gleaming eyes were bordered with a tinge of koh'ol: he had an aquiline nose, a chin somewhat pointed, a well-chiseled mouth, and a heavy, grizzled beard. His costume was much the same as that of the Nagib of Mareb.

Coffee and chiboques were brought in by black slaves, and I prepared myself for the usual catechetical process.

On our arrival at Belêd-el-Wadi, the réis said to me—"Talk as freely as you please with this Nagib, who is no fanatic, but, unlike his countrymen in general, fond of improving himself, on which account he likes strangers. We all have our faults, however, and as he is no more perfect than other men, I must warn you to be careful not to hurt his vanity. Séid-Abd'el-Rahim likes to think his villages without rivals, and his oasis a paradise upon earth."

As soon as the réis had left us, I began acting upon his advice by telling the Nagib that I considered his country the finest in the world—an opinion which seemed to afford him great satisfaction, and by the avowal of which I did no great violence to my impressions, which were, undoubtedly, in favor of the village and its environs.

Yet, let me confess, had it been otherwise my eulogy

would have been the same: for, although despising flatterers and hypocrites, my experiences of Mareb and its Nagib would certainly have led me to purchase the good-will of this chieftain by a little judicious glorification, in any case.

This mode of inaugurating our meeting succeeded beyond my expectations. In a few minutes the Nagib addressed me with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance, inviting me to go through his house from bottom to top. He pointed, with stately pride, to his rusty old guns and crumbling fortifications, with all of which possessions he appeared so contented, that I had not strength of mind to disabuse him, but must have feigned surprise and gratification even had I not been instructed as to my conduct by the réis.

In the course of an hour's conversation with this Nagib, on the subject of men and manners in Europe, I expressed my surprise at a certain degree of familiarity displayed by him with regard to these matters.

"I heard much about those things," said he, "in conversation, and in this book are they written down"—and he showed me a manuscript volume, richly bound—"but I took them for fables, such as travelers love to tell. It is fortunate that I have now fallen in with a European by whom they are confirmed. I have no longer any doubts as to their authenticity."

"Whence came this volume?" asked I.

"During my sojourn at Mecca," replied the Nagib, "I met with a taleb from Stamboul, one who had had much intercourse with people of your country, which he had visited. From him I heard of the strange things that take place among the nations of the unbelievers, and it was he who gave me this book in which they are written."

I cast my eye over the manuscript, which I should like to have read all through had I only had time: not from any national pride, indeed, for it was a savage satire upon our

manners and customs, but on account of certain information quite new to me with which it appeared to be teeming.

Taking leave of the Nagib, who was quite charmed with my enthusiasm about the beauty of his Eden, I returned to my tent, where I had hardly arrived when two of his negroes made their appearance with a repast prepared for me, containing, among other things, a dish of *nana*, or mint, which is much relished by the epicures of these countries.

It is prepared by pounding the mint in a mortar, mixing it with a large quantity of pepper, and making it into a paste, which is then boiled over a slow fire. I tried to do honor to this ragoût hitherto unknown to me, but could not appreciate it—for, hardly had I swallowed a spoonful, when I felt as if my throat was on fire, although I can stand as much pepper as most people. Finding the task too much for me, I transferred the compound to Selim, Mohammed, and Saïda, who made it disappear in a marvelously short space of time, and would probably have done the same had it been brought in by the bucketful.

Having dismissed the negroes, with a backsheesh for themselves and a present for their master, I set out, about ten o'clock, to explore the oasis, accompanied, on this occasion, by Selim.

Like the dwelling of the Nagib, the villages of this valley are built partly of stone, partly of brick, the houses being placed close together, so that the back walls form a rampart, pierced with loop-holes, and the terraces so sheltered that the inhabitants can stand siege without hazard if attacked by any of the wild nomad tribes continually hovering on the outskirts. These houses have but one story.

The village of Belêd-el-Wadi, which is looked upon as the capital of the oasis, on account of the Nagib making his residence there, possesses a caravansery and one mosque, in which latter the iman keeps school for the small people of the place. A market is held every Thursday for the sale of fruits, cattle, horses, dromedaries, and asses.

The population of the whole valley amounts to about twelve thousand, including at least one thousand mouëllets or mulattoes who, like the free negroes, sometimes sell their children to the caravans.

"I have been told," said I to a mouëllet, "that you sell your children—is that the truth, or is it slander?"

"It is the truth," was the reply.

"Will you dispose of this boy?" continued I, though without any intention of buying him.

"Not that one," replied the mouëllet, "because he helps me to work—but if you will buy this younger one, you can have him for four thalers."

Upon this, I was beset by a troop of blackamoors, crying out:

"Buy this one—five thalers!"

"Buy mine—only three thalers!"

Then some one would exclaim—"You ask too much, this man will not give such a price!" while others cried—"You ask too little, and are spoiling the market!" and so the argument ended in a pitched battle, the scene not appearing to make the slightest impression upon the mothers of the children, who were by.

Wherever the valley is cultivated, the soil is raised above the surface of the torrent which comes down in the rainy season, the waters of which are confined by stone dikes. The mode of culture is similar to that followed at Mareb.

To the east of Belêd-el-Wadi there is a *sauie* or cistern, containing an abundant supply of water, good in quality, except that it is somewhat muddy. Before drinking this water, the natives allow it to stand for some time, because, as they told me, it contains worms which, if swallowed, produce the disease already alluded to as the *ark-el-ensil* or Guinea-worm—an idea generally prevalent among the Arabs as to the origin of that malady.

Some nabacks of unusual height grow along the borders of the water-course, in the bed of which abound asclepias,

the thick leaves of which contain a sweet sap, and fig trees whose dense foliage affords a delightful shade to the weary traveler.

Besides these, the general productions of the valley are: mimosas, cypress-pines, rose and cherry-laurels, willows, canes, apricots, mulberries, pomegranates, plums, pears, mangoes, papaws, dates, melongenas, radishes, mallows, colocinth, cotton-trees, yellow-flowering cactus, mint, senna, velvet trefoil, and *zacoum*, a plant resembling our worm-wood, but of a deeper green, and used by the Wadites for seasoning their ragoûts. They also manufacture it into a kind of tinder, which lights at the explosion of a few grains of powder.

These people are essentially shepherds; but they never move away from their native valley to the more distant pasturage. On account of this domestic tendency, the other Bedouins accuse them of having adopted the habits of fellâhs—nor will they intermarry with them, averring that they have degenerated from the pure blood. Nevertheless, these Wadites are a thriving people.

The women insert in the cartilage of the nose two small stars of silver, set with pearls. They wear neck-laces of shells from the Indian Ocean, and have chains of bright steel affixed to the fold of the mantle coming over the head. Their girdles are confined with clasps plated with mother-of-pearl.

This valley abounds with poultry and wild Guinea fowl—the eggs of which latter are taken by the natives, and hatched by common hens.

Humped oxen are very abundant, as well as camels and dromedaries. Horses of a superior class are also raised here, but not in great numbers, as the country is not adapted for them; to make up for which, however, there are endless flocks of sheep and goats, the latter of very large size, and having ears so small as to be hardly perceptible.

Gazelles are very numerous, and remarkably tame, ming-

ling with the flocks of goats, among which they are allowed to browse undisturbed.

The hare, the hedgehog, and the porcupine are looked upon as unclean beasts in the Mareb country, and in some parts of Hadramaut—a prejudice which permits them to multiply to a great extent.

The cats of this community are half wild, hunting nothing but the poultry and other birds—a state of things highly favorable to the rats, which swarm in such quantities as to be considered one of the scourges of the country. These rats are of great size, with long muzzles, and tremendous whiskers. The back of the animal is of a dusky brown, the belly white. Their squeak is of a sharpness terribly hostile to repose; and they play all manner of ill-natured tricks in houses where they take up their abode—such as running away with the victuals just as they are about to be served up.

There is a species of ant found in this oasis, the bite of which is very severe. These insects attack trees even, upon which their bite produces green excrescences, which eventually turn white and take the consistence of mushrooms.

Of the scorpions, which are very common, I observed two kinds: the species already mentioned, five or six inches long, and a smaller variety, of a reddish color. The pain occasioned by the bite of these reptiles is very acute and distressing. The mode of treatment practiced for their cure by the surgeons of the country is to scarify the wound; after which they either cup all around it, or poultice it with the warm entrails of a lamb. The limb is then bandaged up, to prevent the venom from diffusing itself to the arteries.

For the bites of other venomous creatures, which are common here, and much dreaded, cauterization with the hot iron is usually employed. Leaves of the balm of Mecca are then bound upon the wound, by which means a cure is sometimes effected.

Among the many fierce, carnivorous beasts of this region, besides the lion and panther, which are to be encountered everywhere, are to be included the hyena and the jackal.

The hyena, or *dubbâh*, passes among the Arabs for a stupid, cowardly beast. Nevertheless, in Mareb and Hadramaut, they have been known to attack the cattle at pasture, seizing their victim by the muzzle, and worrying it until they bring it to the ground. The Arabs look upon this animal as very small game, hunting it sometimes on their horses or dromedaries, or with grayhounds—but they will not waste powder upon it.

When they have discovered the den where the hyena lurks, so great is their contempt for the beast that it is not unusual for some of the hunters to creep in, covering the entrance with their abbayes, so as to prevent the least light from penetrating. Shouting loudly as they grope about, they boldly seize the animal, which offers no resistance, paralyzed as he is by the audacity of the attack, muzzle him, and beat him out of his retreat with clubs.

The skin of so dastardly a brute is, of course, in but little request: many people, indeed, would not allow it to be brought into their houses or tents, saying that it can bring no good luck with it. The flesh, however, is eaten by the Arabs—but they abstain carefully from using any portion of the head as food, more especially the brain, supposing that it would make fools and cowards of them. They have a proverb about dull, timorous persons which says, *Kullu raz dubbâh*—"He has eaten the head of a hyena."

They call the jackal *Katib Yusuf*—"Joseph the scribe"—a name derived, probably, from some old religious ceremony. For this animal figures in the *Amenthes*, or Judgment of the Dead, among the ancient Egyptians—sometimes holding one of the scales of the balance in which the souls are weighed before the tribunal of Osiris—sometimes in the character of a scribe.

But I must leave this subject to the consideration of the *savants*, whose proper business is to investigate it.

Like the inhabitants of Mareb, the Wadites are all disciples of Zeid: They are exceedingly hospitable, even to strangers.

When the rainy season is backward, they offer up prayers and have recourse to certain ceremonies, to obtain from heaven the desired rain, which is necessary to their existence.

Among these ceremonies there is one that would appear to derive its origin from Paganism. The women make up a large doll, which they clothe in rich garments, putting a tall, pointed bonnet on its head. This done, they carry it in procession around the fields, crying aloud and singing, with great perseverance. The woman who leads the procession carries the doll, which, however, she must give up to any of the others nimble enough to overtake her. This rule gives rise to great racing and emulation.

A similar ceremony is performed by the men, whose processions, however, are on horseback, or on dromedaries.

At six o'clock, the black slaves of the Nagib again came to my tent, bringing dinner. They also bore with them some provisions for my journey, several purses, and a magnificent djembie sheathed in silver, as presents from their master.

When our repast was over, and while Selim and Mohamed were loading and saddling my dromedaries, I went to take leave of the Nagib, with whom I remained for some time in conversation upon the fruitful theme of our social customs, which shocked him more and more as I explained and attempted to justify them. I made him a parting compliment upon the beauty of his oasis, which pleased him so much that he embraced me as we took leave of one another.

At eight o'clock we were again upon the route, followed by the good wishes of the people—and about nightfall we found ourselves entering another mountain region.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN ARAB'S REVENGE.

ABOUT an hour's toil, over ground of the roughest character, brought us to a great dry water-course, which winds through a lovely valley, the verdure and rich foliage of which reminded me of the luxuriant vegetation of the Nile. Some of the trees here resemble junipers. I observed two varieties of these, called by the Arabs *etel* and *arin*.

The strange sighing of the wind through the forest ranges of this valley sounds like the falling of a distant cascade. From the dense thicket there also came wafted to us the song of the blackbird, the latest songster of the birds of day; and the screech of the owl, the first watcher among those of the night.

As we descended into the valley, our senses were charmed by the tinkling of a little brook of sweet, limpid water, which flowed by upon the sand, offering a rare treat to us thirsty wayfarers.

On the route from our last halting-place I observed several rats, of a gray color on the back, with small brown spots—white underneath. They are longer in form than those of Belêd-el-Wadi, and have a tuft at the end of the tail, which is about eight inches long. These rats are wonderfully swift, so that it is next to impossible to catch them. They burrow in the ground.

Toward its eastern limit, this valley is low and sandy, the western tract of it being some ten feet higher. The bed of the water-course is strewed with large blue and gray cobble-stones. Its banks are carpeted with water-trefoil and plantain, and fringed with reeds. Wild mint also grows there in abundance, its long shoots adorned with azure flow-

ers, and its aroma so powerful that the sand for some distance round is impregnated with it.

Leaving this valley, we urged our dromedaries, with great difficulty, up an extremely steep mountain, a quadrangular pyramid in form—immediately after descending from which we came to five or six mounds, resembling the heaps of stones thrown in Corsica, and elsewhere, on the graves of persons who have been assassinated. The stones of which these mounds are composed, however, are immense blocks, each of which might have been cast there by a passing giant.

Further on we met with two veritable *mucchios*, or cairns, to which each member of the caravan contributed a pebble.

We soon entered another valley, the fresh foliage of which compensated us somewhat for our previous toil. Here we saw myriads of pigeons, remarkable for their brilliant plumage, that of the back being green, the breast yellow, and the wing-coverts azure.

Near the middle of the valley there towers up another sugar-loaf mountain, from which it divides into two branches. One of these, covered with luxuriant vegetation, presents all manner of obstacles to the traveler—the other, displaying nothing but sand and sterile rock, is smooth and accessible, on which account we selected it for our route. This branch led us to a narrow gorge, between the rocky sides of which men and camels were obliged to squeeze and press onward, like a river rushing through a channel too narrow for it.

Many paths are here tracked out upon the sand; and soon the fall of some of our camels warned us of another dry water-course, which we were prevented from seeing by the darkness of the night. Some of the hills on the edges of this ravine are covered with a clay adapted for cultivation. The peak of the tallest of them presents the appearance of a piece

of mosaic, from the number of mineralogical specimens with which it is studded.

On the summit of these hills we found several graves covered with cairns or stones. The dead are buried in these elevated situations, I was informed, to prevent their remains from being carried away by the periodical floods.

After winding for some distance through a well-wooded country, we came to a plain covered with cypress-pines and asclepias, many of the latter dead, but sending up vigorous saplings from their roots. The gentian and the lesser centaury were also to be found here.

It was about half-past twelve o'clock when we halted on this plain, not far from a douar, around which large flocks of sheep and goats were lying. Warned of our approach by the barking of their dogs, the sheik of the douar, attended by three of his chief men, came forward to reconnoiter, the result of which precaution being satisfactory to them, they came to us with milk, assida, and fruit, and we partook with them of the bread and salt.

One of the three by whom the sheik was accompanied was a noble-looking old man, with a snow-white beard, features embodying an expression of profound sadness, and a reserved manner quite in character with his appearance. On the principle that the less a man says the more one is curious to talk with him, Abn-Bekr-el-Doâni and I did our best to get into conversation with this old man; until, tired of asking questions, to which he replied by monosyllables only, we requested the sheik to enlighten us as to his history, which could not but be interesting.

"It is a sad story and a fearful one," said the sheik; "an example of revenge such as we see but too often in these countries. Yet Hassan is a brave, honorable Marebey, incapable of doing harm except to those by whom he has been wronged. He lost a wife and child to whom he was tenderly devoted—in whom his happiness was centered; and, white though his beard is now, this great misfortune

of his youth is yet uppermost in his thoughts. He seldom speaks—but when he does it is to talk about that direful calamity.”

“Pray ask him to relate the story to us?” said I.

“He would like nothing better,” rejoined the sheik, turning to the old Arab and saying, “Hassan, these travelers would fain hear your history, and I have said that you will not refuse to tell it to them.”

The eyes of the old man shot forth rays of fire. He advanced, and seating himself in the center of a circle which we formed round him, told us the following story of an Arab’s revenge :

One evening three Arab men and a young girl were seated under a tent, pitched near the skirts of a douar, upon the slope of a hill, at the base of which ran a crystal brook.

The eldest of the three Arabs, a man well stricken in years, was known as Ibrahim. He was the father of the young girl, whose name was Newar.

Of the two younger Arabs who sat near him, one was Khaled, accounted one of the richest among the chiefs of a neighboring douar.

The other was myself—Hassan.

We were both aspirants for the hand of Newar, who, reclining pensively upon the skin of a lion, blew thin wreaths of the pale blue smoke of the chicha from her ruby lips.

The young girl knew not that either Khaled or I had made proposals for her hand.

Night was closing in upon us. Seated around a fire kindled at the entrance of the tent, we watched in silence ; while Newar, plying her palm-leaf fan, brightened up the dull embers of the fire, upon which a vessel of water had been set to boil.

The old man Ibrahim looked steadily at us, glancing sometimes at his daughter, as if he tried to read in her

heart the secret which she had not yet confided to him, in hopes, perchance, that he might discover it himself.

This evening Newar was even more enchanting than usual.

Her dress was perfect. She wore a necklace of shells, while massive bracelets of silver were clasped around her wrists and ankles.

A flowing mantle of blue cloth, open at the bosom and gathered around the waist with a girdle of silk, fell gracefully to her feet. Her head was enveloped in a light som-mada of white silk, from which the tresses of her jet-black hair stole softly down upon her shoulders. Her eyebrows and nails were tinged with koh'ol and henna.

Ibrahim took the vessel from the fire, and having put into it some finely ground coffee, filled from it the *finjals*,* producing also some tobacco for our chiboques. Then, addressing his daughter, he said :

“Sing for us, my child, the love song I like so well—the one lately composed by you.”

Newar took her darbouka and, striking a light accompaniment with her fingers on the ringing parchment, sang :

“My heart for thee is lonely
The live-long day;
I gaze to see thee coming
Far, far away.
And when the breeze comes sighing
From thy douar,
My sleeping dreams are happy—
My waking are.

“I love to see thee coming,
Hitherward bent;
To watch thy snow-white camel
I leave the tent.

* Little cups without handles, fitting into each other, so that the outer one protects the hand from the heat communicated by the coffee to the inner.

Thy snow-white camel moving
Swift as the wind,
Her housings all with silver
Cords entwined.

“Two pearly tears are falling,
But not of grief;
Joy in my heart is dwelling,
Oh, sweet relief!
You wave your hand toward me,
Bidding farewell;
I look—‘when again are you coming?
Oh, my love, tell!’”

While the sweet melody of the damsel's voice was still ringing, a low, distant sound came to my ear—a sound that made my blood tingle. Raising my hand toward Newar, to enjoin silence, I held my ear close to the ground, the better to hear those far off murmurs so easily recognized by an Arab.

Ibrahim and Khaled, who knew what the sound foreboded, watched vigilantly each breath of air from the desert.

Suddenly the dromedaries, which were kneeling round the tent, began to utter feeble cries, as, with outstretched neck and ears laid back, they gazed wildly into the dark night, shaking with fear.

With the hoarse cries of the dromedaries now chimed in the tremulous bleating of the sheep and goats, which came crowding into the tent for safety.

These were signs not to be mistaken. The lion was at hand: the night was going to be a night of blood.

Although startled at first, Khaled and I soon recovered our presence of mind. The former seized his silver-mounted pistols and lance, striking the latter into the ground so as to have it ready to his hand, while I took down from the tent-pole the long matchlock of Ibrahim, who, sword in hand, was ready for the combat.

“Glory to Allah, my children!” cried the old man, “let Allah be our judge. You both love my daughter. He who slayeth the lion shall have her.”

I looked at Newar, whose eyes were raised for a moment, as if appealing to Heaven in prayer, thence falling with a glance of love upon me.

Khaled marked the glance. He started, and his hand clutched eagerly at the handle of one of his pistols.

At a signal from her father, Newar retired into the inner chamber of the tent.

“We must fight boldly in her defense, my children,” said the old man; “the danger is nearer than you suppose;” and he had hardly spoken when the dread voice of the lion was heard, nearer than before.

Khaled pointed his pistols toward the door of the tent, while I held the matchlock ready for action, and Ibrahim, behind us, guarded the inner compartment, into which his daughter had retreated.

A roar like thunder, shaking the very ground, announced that the lion was upon us, and a moment afterward the tent fell in, crushing us to the ground, amid cries of distress. Deceived by the color of the tent, the brute must have mistaken it for a mound, breaking the cords by his weight, as he bounded upon it, and throwing down the pole.

He remained quiet for a moment, astonished, probably, at the ground having thus given way beneath his feet; but his keen scent soon detected the presence of man—a discovery at which he expressed his satisfaction by smothered growls, just as a horse neighs when the bag of oats is brought to him.

The beast now made powerful efforts to tear to pieces the tent cloth by which we were protected from his attack, seizing and worrying it with his teeth and claws. Fortunately my coolness had not deserted me, and I kept striking at him with my djembie, through the thick folds that en-

veloped us, the growls of anger that sometimes followed my blow indicating that it had not fallen harmless.

But this unequal conflict only goaded the animal into madness, and the frequent rending of the tent-cloth announced to us that we could no longer hope for safety beneath it; while now another danger menaced us, for the cloth had ignited from the coals of fire scattered about beneath it, and we were nearly suffocated by the smoke before I succeeded in cutting a passage through it with my djembie.

Through this aperture I struggled out, determined to rush into single combat with the lion, who, scared by the fire, however, had retreated to a short distance, where he lay crouched upon the sand, glaring upon us as if confident that nothing could save us from his fangs.

I sprang to where Newar lay, entangled with the tent, and cutting it open, drew forth the young girl, who was now senseless, carrying her as far as I safely could from the fire.

In like manner I extricated her father; and now Khaled alone remained beneath the heavy tent-cloth, where I might easily have left him to perish in the smoldering flames—him who but a few minutes before, actuated by jealousy toward me, had played significantly with the butt of his pistol.

But this idea did not dwell with me for a moment, and I thought but of saving him. His assistance, besides, would be necessary to me in defending Newar. I forgot that he was my rival, and I restored him to air and life.

By the flickering light of the flames, we now perceived the lion extended on the ground at a distance of a few yards from us, licking his wounded flank. Our fire-arms had all been left beneath the fallen tent, and now, as we hesitated, three explosions announced to us that they had been reached by the fierce element. But the flames were

already diminishing, and soon their terrors would not be sufficient to keep our dread enemy at a distance.

We were preparing, then, to attack him with our djembies alone, when we heard a confused noise of approaching voices, and soon after were surrounded by the Arabs of the douar, upon seeing whom the lion raised himself to his feet, and, uttering a hideous roar, bounded away into the darkness.

With the assistance of the Arabs, we now extinguished the flames, by heaping sand upon them; and in a short time a new tent was prepared for the old man and his daughter, the dispersed flocks were brought together, and such property as had escaped the ravages of the fire was secured.

While this was going on, Newar approached me, saying, "I will wait for you before day-break, at the source of the brook."

Intoxicated with happiness, I clasped the hand of the young girl in mine.

Tranquillity had now been restored. Khaled bent his steps towards his douar, to prepare for to-morrow's chase—while I took my course in the direction of the place of rendezvous.

There I waited for a long time. Fatigued by the excitement and events of the night, I could hardly have resisted the influence of sleep, but for the ominous yelping of the jackals; and I was beginning to be uneasy on account of Newar, when I felt the soft, tremulous touch of a hand upon my shoulder, and on looking up, saw, by the light of the stars that glow so brilliantly out from the lovely skies of these countries, the young girl standing before me, clad in a robe of white, and holding an ax in her hand.

"Fountain of the desert! joy of my heart!" exclaimed I, in ecstasy.

"I have come," said she, "as I promised. Heaven grant that my love may not prove fatal to you!"

"You love me, then?" cried I.

She looked at me reproachfully, and said—"This night would I have confided to my father my preference for you, but it was written in the book of destiny that it was not to be, and, now, Allah has spoken by the mouth of Ibrahim."

"Nor shall your love be fatal to me," rejoined I, "for I feel myself endowed by Allah with strength and courage enough to bring me victoriously through the worst of dangers."

The young girl then gave me the ax, saying: "Take this weapon, which I have saved from the flames by which our tent was destroyed. It was formerly borne by Séid-Nassib, whose tomb is at Kousen. With this weapon you shall conquer. Go, now, and may Allah watch over you!"

And with these words, she disappeared like a vision, among the thick foliage of the rose-laurels.

Filled with joy and hope, I returned to my tent, to take some necessary repose: but I arose at the dawn of day, and saddled my white camel; and laying aside matchlock and lance, which were unfit for my purpose, I slung my sword over my shoulder, placed my djembie, pistols, and the ax given me by Newar in my girdle, and rode way to the mountain.

On my way I passed near the tent of Ibrahim, in order to take from that point the track of the lion. There I found Newar and her father, contemplating the disasters of the night. I advanced towards them, dismounted, and kissed, respectfully, the hand of the old man. A tear was trembling in the eye of the young girl. Her father saw it, and said to me in a voice that betrayed his emotion—"Go, my son, and may my blessing attend you!"

I rode away, following at a slow pace on the bloody tracks of the lion, which I knew would lead me to his cave.

After a long hunt, I entered a steep gorge covered with a dense growth of brushwood—the close foot-marks of the

lion now indicating that he had commenced here to slacken his pace. But I had far to go yet before I found him.

Riding on for some hours, over ground barely accessible, I at last reached a valley, overshadowed by a steep, sun-scorched mountain, and strewn with huge rocks rolled thither by the torrents of successive ages. Some of the rocks on the flank of the mountain were so undermined as to seem suspended in air, and ready to topple down at the slightest touch. A small brook, winding among the stony masses, flowed peaceably, in some places, over its flinty bed, leaping elsewhere in a wild cascade over the rocks that opposed its progress. Fig-trees of stately size grew upon the borders of the brook, inviting to repose in the pleasant shade cast by them.

In this valley, nature was truly magnificent.

Dismounting from my dromedary, which could be of no further use to me in penetrating these fastnesses, I unsaddled her, and, having first blown some water into her nostrils from the hollow of my hand, allowed her to drink at the brook. The noble animal, observing these preparations for a halt, lifted one of her fore legs to have the fetters put upon it.

I smiled sadly at this, and said—"I will not fetter you, my good and faithful companion, for I know not whether my hand may return to set you at liberty. Should you see me again, it will be a proud time for you, laden as you shall be with the dead body of the lion: but if I return not, you will retrace your road to our douar, that the daughter of Ibrahim and her father may thus have notice of my fate."

I tucked up my abbaye, the long folds of which might have interfered with my action, and drew my girdle tightly around me. Then, grasping firmly the ax given me by Newar, I commenced to ascend the mountain, leaping from rock to rock, with bare feet, so as not to disturb the lion, and gliding noiselessly, like a jackal, through the thickets of cactus.

Now and then I paused to listen ; but so absolute was the silence in these gloomy retreats, that I could hear nothing except the beating of my own heart.

At last, after an hour of such toil, I perceived a vaulted cavern, formed by the accidental falling together of some rocks, near the entrance of which lay the grand old lion, in a majestic attitude of repose. As I approached, he raised his awful head, and gazed round with a stately look, the rustling caused by my movements having made him suspicious of coming danger. Screened from him by the broad leaves of a cactus, I stopped, holding my breath, and fearing even to wink, lest the slightest motion might betray me. Soon, however, he resumed his attitude of repose, his head resting between his great fore-paws.

I waited breathlessly for perhaps ten long minutes, when the loud snoring of the lion announced that sleep had laid its spell upon him. Now was the time for action. Khaled might appear at any moment, and dispute the victory with me.

I arose softly, the cold perspiration beading out upon my brow. A slight noise caused me to turn my head, when I saw my rival clambering up the side of the mountain. This brought back all my resolution. Poising the ax in my right hand, I grasped a pistol with my left and advanced with the soft tread of a cat towards the lion, who was sleeping heavily.

With two swift blows of the ax I cut off, or mutilated the two fore paws of the sleeping monster, bounding backwards from him, with all my strength, as the last blow fell. The maimed animal plunged furiously on the ground, uttering frightful yells and craunching the stones with his teeth. He tried to rise, but fell back helpless.

I had now clambered to a rock that commanded his den, from which position I discharged both my pistols at him, sending the bullets into his side. This new assault inspired him with momentary vigor. With two or three desperate

plunges he gained the platform of rock upon which I was crouched, and I was about to throw myself upon him, ax in hand, when a bullet sped into the middle of his forehead and laid him dead at my feet. It was from the matchlock of Khaled, who, guided by the roars of the lion, had arrived at the scene of conflict just as the animal, from his position, offered an easy mark.

"I was so unfortunate," said he, advancing, "as to owe my life to you when you rescued me from the fire by which the tent of Ibrahim was destroyed: now there are no favors between us, for I have saved yours. Allah be praised! the lion is mine."

"Saved my life!" exclaimed I, shaking with passion—"you have come rather like the bird of prey, stooping upon the game just stricken down by the hunter."

"The lion is mine—*mine!*" reiterated he.

"Touch him at your peril!" shouted I, furiously. Then, after a moment's consideration, I added, calmly: "Let this point be decided by some of the wise men of our people—the chief of your douar and the chief of mine, with Ibrahim to decide between them, should differences arise."

"So be it, then," said Khaled, and we parted to seek our dromedaries, with which we soon returned, and, having slung the body of the lion across them, as they stood side by side, we retraced our steps in this order to the tent of Ibrahim.

Arrived there, we laid the bleeding lion at the feet of Newar, recounting faithfully to the old man all that had passed at the death struggle.

That evening the sheiks of the douars to which my rival and I belonged met in the tent of Ibrahim, where the dead lion was laid out in evidence. Lots were drawn by Khaled and myself, and to me it fell to tell the story, which I did plainly and circumstantially, while my rival betrayed his duplicity by the confused manner in which he contradicted me at some points of my narrative.

The three judges considered for a while together, and then the youngest of them spoke out in a loud voice, saying:

"The lion, maimed as he was by Hassan, could have made no further resistance when Khaled appeared upon the scene of conflict. To Hassan, then, belongs the victory."

And then the second spoke, saying:

"The lion was vanquished by Hassan before Khaled came. To Hassan, therefore, belongs the lion."

Lastly, the eldest spoke, saying:

"That which Khaled did might have been done by a mere child. Hassan mastered the lion, and to Hassan the lion belongs."

Upon the delivery of this judgment Khaled rose to go, scowling upon me with a look in which was concentrated all the hatred that heart of man can hold.

When he was gone, we skinned the lion, and I went, transported with love and joy, to lay my trophies at the feet of Newar. No obstacle now interposed to prevent our union. The dower was named by Ibrahim, and then the sheik stood up, and pronounced, in set phrases, the words of the marriage contract.

On the following day, our friends came to congratulate us, offering gifts, according to custom, while Newar, standing before the tent, distributed among them handfuls of dried fruit from a basket. Among those present at this ceremony was an Arab of the tribe to which Khaled belonged. This man made a sign that he wished to speak to me. I went toward him.

"Behold," said he, handing me a piece of copper money—"this is the wedding gift sent unto you by Khaled. The fire is a-light by the source of the brook, where Khaled awaits you."

I knew what this meant. It was the token of undying hate, sworn against me by my former rival. Taking the

piece of money from the Arab, I gave him a similar piece in exchange, and he departed.

When I arrived at the spring, where Khaled waited for me, I found him watching by a fire, which burned upon a hearth composed of three stones set against each other. He glared upon me with a fierce scowl as I approached, and casting a handful of dried herbs on the fire, said,

“Where is the piece of money that I sent you?”

I gave it to him.

“Depend upon my everlasting hatred,” continued he, as he placed it in the fire, together with the piece that I had sent to him in exchange.

When the pieces of money were red hot, Khaled withdrew his from the fire, and placed it upon the back of my hand, which I held out towards him, while I took mine and placed it, in like manner, upon his out-stretched hand: this done, we seated ourselves, and watched silently the smoke fuming up from our burning flesh; careful not to betray, by look or movement, the sharp anguish felt by us.

When the coins had ceased to burn, we threw them from us, and sprinkled a few grains of powder upon the blistered scars left by them. Then, rising to our feet, we recited after each other, in a solemn voice, the following terrible words:

“We swear enmity against one another so long as these marks remain, reserving the right to gratify our hate by every possible means. Wives, children, parents, all that is dear to each, are involved in our undying hostility.”

Having taken this oath, we separated, each taking care to warn his friends and family of the dire compact entered into between us. Henceforth neither Khaled nor I ever ventured forth unarmed—nor did I ever leave my tent without placing Newar in special charge of a female slave.

Some months after these events, as Ibrahim was leaving my tent, he was shot dead with a bullet, which entered the back of his head. At this moment I happened to be

returning from the chase, and, quickening my pace as the sound of the shot sent a thrill of evil omen through me, I caught a glimpse of Khaled riding away with the utmost speed of his dromedary. On a paper that lay at my feet as I entered the tent, I read these words :

"Khaled has slain Ibrahim, that mourning may be mingled with the joy soon to come unto Hassan and Newar with the birth of their first-born ; this is but the first blow, the warning of future vengeance. Tremble for that which is to come."

A few days after the funeral of Ibrahim, Newar presented me with a son. From that time she remained within the tent, where I watched by her with constant assiduity.

The child grew apace ; the increasing vigor of his limbs, day after day, giving promise of future manly strength—when, on returning to my tent one afternoon, I saw these words traced upon the sand :

"I WAITED UNTIL SHE WAS A MOTHER."

My blood ran cold as I entered the tent, where I found my wife in the agonies of death. An Arab, they told me, had brought figs to our tent. Newar had eaten of them, and she was poisoned. She died in my arms, after an hour of intense suffering.

All that night I mourned beside her. In the morning we buried her, and I returned despondingly to my lonely dwelling, when my eyes fell upon the following words, written in the sand, at the spot from which those of yesterday had been effaced :

"HAVE I STRUCK HOME?"

And a little further on :

"THIS IS MY SECOND BLOW. LOOK, NOW, FOR MY THIRD."

"You shall never strike it !" exclaimed I, "ere long I will reckon with you for all my wrongs."

From that moment I went forth no more from the tent, employing a slave to attend to all our wants without. Armed to the teeth, I watched unceasingly over my child,

longing for the day when he should be able to accompany me—for I was determined not to let him out of my sight until I had slain our mortal foe.

But Khaled, as I have already said, was one of the richest of his tribe—rich enough to have purchased the fidelity not of one slave only, but of ten; and at daylight one morning I found myself alone in my tent. I called, but there was no one to answer.

“Betrayed! betrayed by my slaves!” exclaimed I bitterly, and, at that moment, I found these words written repeatedly on the sand around the tent:

“YOU SHALL MOURN FOR YOUR CHILD TO THE LAST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE, BUT YOU SHALL NEVER KNOW HIS FATE. IN HIS DEATH YOU MIGHT HAVE FOUND CONSOLATION; IN HIS LOSS THERE IS NONE.”

“By Allah, you shall restore him to me!” shouted I—“Allah be my witness!”—and, slinging on my sword and matchlock, I placed my ax, djembie, and pistols in my girdle, and set out in quest of my foe.

I knew that he was in the habit of skulking about the mountains, hunting gazelles; and in these fastnesses, rolled up in my abbaye, I passed the nights, concealing myself by day in some close place, from which I commanded an extensive view of the surrounding regions. There, motionless as the rock upon which I rested, I watched for the destroyer of my happiness, with that patience which the hope of vengeance gives to the injured.

For nearly six months did I thus watch without once catching a glimpse of him—when one morning just as daylight broke, I spied a hunter riding into the valley that lay below me. He advanced until he arrived at the foot of the mountain where my retreat was, and I smiled as I saw him prepare to clambor up its sides. It was the first smile that had curved my lip for six long months, for in the rider I recognized Khaled, my mortal enemy.

The path taken by him in his ascent was chosen with cau-

tion, being open to the view on both sides, and destitute of cover, except at one point, where grew some bushes, into which I glided stealthily, and, resting my matchlock on a branch, awaited his approach.

As he neared my ambush he stopped, looking narrowly at every thicket that might give cover to a foe; but seeing nothing to arouse a suspicion of danger, he continued his course, though cautiously, and with his matchlock ready for action. My aim was already upon him, however: I fired, and he fell headlong from his dromedary, with a bullet-hole through his shoulder, his matchlock flying from his hand as he came to the ground,

Raising himself, he clutched at a pistol with his unmaimed hand; but before he could grasp it I had thrown myself upon him, and, unwinding the leathern girdle from his body, bound him with it, hand and foot.

"Have I struck home?" exclaimed I, as I planted one of my feet upon his breast. "This is but the first blow of my vengeance—judge what there is in store for you! I could as easily have sent my bullet through your head or your heart as through your shoulder; but I have reserved you for the torture, that I may learn the fate of my child. Murderer of my wife and of her father! destroyer of my happiness and hopes! behold the vengeance brought by thee upon thine own head! Glory to Allah, who hath thus delivered thee over to my wrath!"

Khaled made no reply, but began to recite his prayers.

"Listen," continued I, as the tears ran down from my eyes: "for months have I longed for the hour when my soul was to be gladdened by your tortured writhings; but a father's love is stronger than his desire for vengeance. Tell me but where my son is and you shall meet with a merciful death—nay, I may even spare your life if you will but unfold to me the mystery of his fate!"

"Coward!" shouted Khaled.

"A coward, am I?" retorted I; and, drawing from my

purse a piece of money, I held it before his eyes, saying, "With this piece has my hand been branded with the token of your irrevocable hate. See how it fits the scar! But what have I done to deserve it? What had Newar done? what Ibrahim? what my child?—my child, whom I entreated you to restore to me!"

My voice faltered with emotion, as I uttered the last words. Khaled perceived it, and scowled upon me with fiendish joy.

Collecting some branches, I made a fire in which I placed the piece of money. Then, turning to my victim, I said: "Once more, tell me where I am to find my child—speak, else shall tortures unimaginable be inflicted on thee!"

"You shall never know," replied he. "Kill me when you will."

"Kill you!" exclaimed I. "Oh! that I could prolong your torments as you have my sorrows!" and, poising aloft the ax given me by Newar, I reiterated, "My child! What hast thou done with my child?"

There was no reply. With two blows of the ax I cut off his feet.

His features contracted with pain, but no word passed his lips. He would not give me the consolation of knowing the fate of my child. "You little think what torture awaits you," continued I. "Speak, while there is yet time, while yet there may be mercy for you."

He remained silent—agony upon his brow, a fiendish smile upon his lips. I took the piece of money red-hot from the fire, and laid it upon one of his eyes.

In spite of his resolution, a yell of pain escaped him as he felt the burning metal sink down into his eyeball. He writhed and twisted himself about, bounding from the ground in his agony.

"Speak now!" shouted I. "I am listening. Speak, or I have worse tortures at hand for thee!" and I sat down beside him, listening eagerly to every breath that passed his

lips, in the hope that even one word might give me a clue to the fate of my child.

But my hopes were vain. The rancor of my enemy's hate raised him above all suffering. The ingenuity of my torture was not a match for it, and he died without uttering a word.

I fled away from the corpse, leaving it to the hyenas and jackals.

"Such is my history, O Sidis!" said the old Arab, when he had concluded his recital. "All that was long ago. Years upon years have rolled over my head since then, yet I think ever of my wife and child; and hence it is that I am grave and silent. Be not offended, then, at my short replies to your questions when you first addressed me." And with these words he arose and went away.

It was about three o'clock as we resumed our march; and now the stars, which had been paling before the yellow spreading of the dawn, were lighted out by the full splendor of the morning sun.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FONDOUCK.—THE ARAB HORSE.—THE FLIES.

SOON after leaving the douar we found our road much encumbered with dead mimosa trees, through the labyrinthian paths winding among which our djemêls steered their camels, as the navigators of the Arabian seas do their barks, among the rocks and reefs with which their course is every where broken.

Further on we came to granite ranges, where the ground

was strewed with huge bowlders, suggesting the idea of giant artillery, the cannon balls and shells of which had been left at random on the field where they fell. These bowlders are of secondary granite.

Here the road crosses a succession of small valleys, hemmed in by mountains presenting every where an aspect of the most gloomy desolation, which fills the mind with an impression of dreariness amounting almost to fear. Even in the valleys the only vegetation consists of a few stunted shrubs—for these ravines are totally destitute of water, which is prevented from springing to the surface by the continuous crust of rock.

As we proceeded we observed a few *asclepias* here and there, and small patches of aromatic plants struggled out wherever there was earth enough to maintain them. At length, on descending a mountain, the ribbed nakedness of which suggested the skeleton of some monstrous animal, we saw at our feet a valley in which the *mimosas* looked fresh and green; and a little further on we discerned a group of young palm-trees—sight welcome to the weary traveler, for it invariably indicates the presence of water; nor had we gone far into the valley when we knew, by the tall frame and pulley, that a *sagüe*, or tank, was at hand.

The inhabitants had cultivated this spot into a small oasis, watered by five or six wells; and here we found an immense *fondouck*, or caravansery, constructed of canes and the trunks of mossouacks, in the form of a great dome, like that of Saint Sophia at Stamboul.

Around the outer walls of this structure are a number of niches or berths for the accommodation of traveling merchants. The roof is supported by trunks of palm-trees, and the whole interior is remarkable for the light elegance of its architecture. Near the entrance is a *café*, opposite which are two or three barbers' shops.

There is a court-yard attached, for the beasts of burden, camels, horses, mules, and asses.

As the berths intended for the merchant-travelers were unoccupied on our arrival, we took possession of them until breakfast was ready; which over, some of us went to the barbers' shops to get shaved and hear the news.

Now the *perruquiers* of France have always enjoyed, and do now enjoy, a well-deserved reputation for their powers of gossip, but they are actually reserved and uncommunicative men in comparison with Arabian barbers. My barber, on this occasion, put forth his full strength in all manner of strange stories, evidently in the hope of hearing mine in return. Unfortunately for him, however, I took refuge in the oriental maxim, which says: "Speech is silver, but silence is gold;" nor did I open my mouth except to abuse him now and then for his unskillful use of bad razors. For his services, nevertheless, I gave him a half thaler, a fee much over that usually paid, but which I am confident he would have gladly refunded to me to know who I was, whence I came, and whither I was going.

I next visited the court-yard of the fondouck, where I found Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni conversing with the sheik of the place, who had come to invite him, together with the two naïfs, the iman, the muezzin, the khrodja, and the dellal, to breakfast with him—an invitation which he also extended to me.

This repast consisted of pillau, boiled mutton, dates, and milk; after which came coffee, chicas, and chiboques; and then conversation commenced, the principal topic being horses, which are raised in great numbers in this part of the country. From this conversation I gleaned some of the following facts:

In Mareb and Hadramaut, as in other parts of Arabia and in Asia Minor, horses are never stabled, but remain in the open air, day and night, tethered to stakes. The circle trodden by them is bedded down with a layer of clean sand, renewed from time to time. In winter a litter of dry dung is substituted, as being warmer than sand.

The Arabs seldom, if ever, put clothing on their horses ; which, nevertheless, exposed as they constantly are to the heat by day and the chilly dews by night, are quite exempt from distempers, retaining their vigor and elasticity to a great age.

Instead of tethering the horses they sometimes hobble them with chains. They water them but once a day, between eleven o'clock and noon ; foddering them all the year round upon barley and raw meat, with green herbage for a change, and hay—which latter is kept twisted up in the form of a rope, and untwisted according as wanted.

During the season of bercim, or clover, those who have fields of it turn their horses out to grass there for a month or two, tethering them to stakes, and changing their ground when they have consumed the herbage on it. An armed *saïss*, or groom, is stationed in a tent hard by, to water the horses and keep off marauders. As long as the clover lasts the animals will not touch either barley or meat. With us it is not considered safe to leave a horse in a clover-field long enough for him to glut himself—but the Arab horses suffer little from indulgence in this food, and that only for the first day or two of using it.

These horses are never shorn or trimmed in any way. Scissors are unknown to them. As I have already mentioned, they are shod only in districts where the ground is hard and stony. The shoes used are plates of an elliptic form, with a hole of about an inch in diameter in the center. The Arab grooms curry and rub down their horses as we do ours.

The Marebeys and Hadramites use the mameluke saddle, while the Arabs of the western side of the peninsula prefer the kind in fashion at Cairo. Both these saddles are set on without cruppers.

For ages has the Arab steed been a theme for the eulogies of the Oriental poets, and justly so.

His lean and taper head, flashing eyes, wide nostrils, slop-

ing withers, short, round barrel, long croup, well set tail, and clean, sinewy legs, combine to give him the palm for beauty above all others of the race, while his docility, courage, abstemiousness, and fleetness, place him on a footing of advantage when compared with the most highly esteemed horses of Europe.

I asked the sheik whose guests we were to enumerate the qualities that go to the making of a good horse, which he did as follows :

“He should be broad in the forehead, chest, croup, and limbs. His chest should be deep also ; his fore-arm, belly, and haunches long ; his loins, pasterns, ears and tail short. He ought to stir up the mud before drinking of the water ; and where prevented from doing this with his feet, by the nature of the ground, should know how to kneel down and disturb it with his muzzle. He should be able to carry a full-grown man, with his weapons and change of apparel, and provisions for himself and rider. He must not start at the rustling of a standard in the wind, nor object to drag a dead body, if necessary ; and finally, he must be able to travel a day’s journey without food or drink.”

The Arabs reckon five different races of the horse of noble blood, descended, according to their traditions, from *Tanayfé*, *Manékyé*, *Koheil*, *Saklouyé*, and *Djulfé*, five favorite mares of the Prophet.

At the birth of a foal of noble race, it is usual to convene witnesses, who commit to writing a description of the new scion of the stock, adding, in the case of a horse-foal, the name and pedigree of the sire—in that of a filly, those of the dam.

This genealogical tree, duly signed and sealed, is enclosed in a little bag of leather, and attached to the neck of the animal, which thenceforward takes rank with the famous coursers, for the possession of which blood has been spilt more than once by the tribes. Such was the origin of the celebrated *war of Dahis*, for example, to which I will pres-

ently refer more at length—a war which, for forty years, raged ceaselessly between the Absides and the Béni-Dhobyan, in the time of Kosai, an ancestor of Mahomet.

Many a time has the warrior in the desert been saved by the fleetness of his horse. Burckhardt tells us how, in 1815, a troop of Druzes, well mounted, dashed upon a band of Bedouins in the Hauran, and drove them back upon their douar. There, hemmed in on all sides by a superior force, they were all cut off, except one, who, gathering his mare together, rushed her through the ranks of the foe, hotly pursued by the best mounted among them. Over rock, plain, and hill they raced at lightning speed, nor did the pursuit slacken, for the Druzes had sworn to put the last of their enemies to the sword. At length, after many hours of this wild chase, the pursuers, disarmed of their wrath by admiration of the noble mare, whose fleetness defied their approach, came to a parley with her rider, and granted him his life on condition of his permitting them to kiss the forehead of his matchless courser. The Arab agreed to this, and the Druzes, on taking their departure, addressed him in these words, now proverbial among them :

“Go, now ; wash the feet of thy steed, and drink the water.”

In some parts of the East, they recognize other noble families of the horse, in addition to the five above mentioned. The *mirlakhour*, or equerry of Kelaon, Sultan of Egypt, in his work entitled *Kamel-el-Sanatein* (“The Art of Training and Curing Horses”), mentions ten, to each of which he gives a special designation.

According to this authority, the horse of Hedjaz is the purest of blood ; that of Nedjêd the surest of foot ; and that of Yémen the most patient and enduring.

Thence he passes into Syria, stating that the horses of Damascus have the finest coats, those of Mesopotamia the best points.

Of the African horses, he counts those of Egypt the fleet-

est, those from the Desert of Barcâh the wildest and most difficult to subdue, and those of Barbary the fittest for the stud.

"This assertion," says M. Ferdinand de Challemaison, in his excellent *Essay upon the Horses of the Sahara*, "this assertion, referring the barb horse to the breed distributed over two continents, should be sufficient to refute an error which General Daumas has admitted into his book, viz., that the barb is not of Arab stock.

"It was this idea, the prevalence of which had long prevented barb stallions from being used for the stud either in France or Algiers, that led him to consult the emir, Abd'el-Kader, who is known to be as well versed in all that relates to the horses of his country as he is in its history.

"He received the following answer:

"'You tell me that the horses of Algeria are supposed to be barbs, not Arabs.

"'Now this opinion recoils upon those who promulgate it, for the barb is of Arab blood.

"'Ben-Kouteïba, in his book entitled *El-Marif*, asserts that: *The barbs are natives of Algeria and Morocco; they are descended from Cahlan. It is stated that they were brought thither by two great Hamyritic tribes, the Sanadja and the Kettama, who came into the country at the time of the invasion of Afrikis-ben-Seïf.**

"From these two opinions it must be concluded that the Berbères, or barbs, are veritable Arabs."

Time for the siesta now drawing near, we took leave of our host, glad to escape from the attacks of the flies—of which, by the by, it was ungrateful for me not to have spoken before now.

* From whom Africa is supposed to derive its name. "This chief," says a tradition, "having carried war into the Magh'reb (Tunis and Tripoli), came to a great country where he found abundance of water. There he ordered a city to be built, and when it was finished he gave it the name of *Afrikieh*, which was afterwards extended to the whole country. Afrikis returned subsequently to Yémen.

Our sufferings from the heat were nothing to what we endured from these plagues. Dante should have introduced them into his description of the torments of the infernal regions, for of all the pests with which humanity is afflicted, they are, perhaps, the most insufferable.

Swarms of these insects pursued us everywhere and for ever, not only biting us, but causing the most insufferable itching. They are well entitled to rank among the plagues of the country. I have seen children literally black with them, in spite of their unceasing efforts to drive them away. The children of these countries, as I have already said, go utterly naked, and these flies stick to them as gadflies do to oxen and horses. Sometimes the victims roll themselves on the ground, to crush their tormentors—but all in vain, for there is ever a cloud of new flies wheeling about them, ready to fall on as the soon as the old ones fall off.

I rose at three o'clock, and, while my companions were trading, explored the neighborhood, in company with Selim, until six, when we returned to the fondouck.

The evening meal over, our *djemêls* reloaded their camels, and we were soon wending our way towards Kond, another oasis ten leagues further on—seventeen from Belêd-el-Wadi.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM THE FONDOUCK TO KOND.—THE CAMEL.—ITS LONGEVITY,
BIRTH, YOUTH, AND EDUCATION.

OUR route on leaving the fondouck led through some fields of millet lately cut down, beyond which we defiled through a narrow pass between piled-up rocks of granite which brought us to an immense plain of sand, bounded to the right and left by mountains.

This plain, however, was not so utterly sterile as the ground traversed by us toward the end of our last stage. It is crossed by an undulating tract of soil, producing great numbers of small mimosas, the flowers of which are yellow and scentless.

In compensation for this monotony of the inanimate, nature teems with a great variety of animal life. At every step we came near treading on those beautiful, silvery, two-legged lizards called by the Arabs the *fish of the desert*, and looked upon by them as a great delicacy, while the *ouaran*, a green lizard from two to three feet in length, stared gravely at us as we passed, seemingly with more curiosity than fear.

The little jerboas, too—those beautiful, miniature kangaroos—were nearly as numerous as grasshoppers in a newly-mown field, bounding away to the right and left in graceful, curved leaps of twelve or fourteen feet, and, when pursued, burying themselves suddenly in the sand. Our djemêls displayed great address in catching these little creatures, which they did by throwing a *sommada* or *abbaye* over them, or even by running them down, plunging their hands after them into the sand, and drawing them out by the hind legs. This mode of seizing them, however, requires considerable adroitness on the part of the hunter, for the bite of the animal is sharp.

Our way was shortened by these picturesque incidents; and, about half an hour after midnight, we reached the extremity of the plain, where we halted at the entrance of another oasis, rich with palm trees, and laid out into well-cultivated fields and gardens, watered from tanks.

Beyond the oasis there is yet another sandy plain, with its yellow-flowering, scentless mimosas; and a brook, on the banks of which fig trees flourish. There are several huts here, for the accommodation of the gardeners and the animals employed by them in raising water from the brook and diverting it into the tanks.

Bedouin dwellings are scattered all around, on the roofs of which the occupants scrambled with great agility at our approach, covering them as completely as I have seen the little islands of the Nile covered by basking crocodiles.

This oasis, from its contrast with the surrounding desert, is a charming spot. But the charm was a transient one for us—for the region beyond it, into which we now came, was one of appalling sterility, and most difficult of access for our animals. Our djemêls, however, instead of having recourse to the brutal violence too often resorted to by European drivers, encouraged their camels with soothing and compassionate expressions. For the Arab does not look upon the camel as a slave whom he can abuse at pleasure. He counts him—as he does his horse—among his friends; respecting him to such an extent, indeed, that he makes him a participator in certain religious practices imposed by the Prophet upon his followers.

“The Bedouin,” Tamisier tells us, “shares with his camel his griefs and his joys. When on a journey, he shortens the way, by recounting wonderful anecdotes of his youthful prowess, or tales of ancient tradition, to which the camel seems to listen with pleased attention, as he moves along with slow, measured step.

“When the rider is in good humor with his animal, he flatters him by talking of his descent, telling him how he came of a stock famous for making long journeys, and promising him a numerous posterity and a happy old age.

“He will say to him :

“‘Your ancestors have served mine for ages, carrying them, often and often, into far countries, with cheerful obedience. I believe you to be a camel worthy of them, and destined to sustain their great reputation; and, to prove my value for you, I not only promise you my perpetual friendship, but am going to tell you about some noble deeds of my family, and the glories of my tribe.’

“Then, as he lounges listlessly along the back of the

noble animal, he spins forth an endless story, teeming with those brilliant metaphors of which the imagination of the Oriental is so prodigal. Pausing, he admits the camel to the privilege of the pipe, by puffing a few clouds of smoke into his nostrils. He then pronounces an opinion that this particular animal is destined to be the greatest of his race. He announces his intention of providing him with a female companion, and promises him a brilliant future ; addressing him all the while as his friend, brother, and by many similar titles of confidence.

“ Sometimes the Arab sings a love-song, or chaunts of warlike deeds. To these songs the camel listens attentively, the pleasure that he experiences from them being evinced by the grinding of his teeth, while he turns his head toward the singer with an expression of deep satisfaction. Absorbed by the wild melody, he seems to forget all hardships, performing, under its spell, journeys of incredible length, which become traditional in the tribe to which he belongs.

“ But when the drought of the desert compels the animal to show signs of fatigue, or of unwillingness to proceed, the fine words and smooth promises of his rider give way to imprecations and abuse.

“ ‘ *Ibn-el-Kelb !* ’ then exclaims the Bedouin—‘ son of a dog !—Jew !—Christian ! have you forgotten that you are the descendant of an accursed race, and my servant ? Know you not that no interference could prevent me from ending your worthless life on the spot, if I only chose ? But I content myself with invoking the wrath of heaven upon you, O ! beast of slothful and disreputable character ; nor shall I fail to transmit to posterity a report of your poltroonery and base conduct. My benisons shall follow the hand that kills you, and Allah will abandon your carcass to the dogs and vultures.

“ ‘ Know you not that I have supported your family and educated yourself ? Do you deny the sacrifices that I have made to bring you to your present state of prosperity ? I

should like to see a camel with a fatter hump than the one under your saddle ; and yet you seem even to have forgotten the amulets I bought to preserve you from the evil eye and keep your course of life smooth down to an enviable old age.’

“ ‘ *Khafer* !—infidel !—I now see that all my kindness has been lavished upon one unworthy of it. May Allah send a bullet into your eye, and another into your stomach, or even into your brain ! I trust that your liver may be devoured by a dog, and that you may be the last of your race, O ! son of a thief ! ’ ”

During the rutting season, which is in the early part of winter, the camels not only fight among themselves, but, if irritated by their masters, try to bite them, or toss them into the air, trampling upon them with fury, if they get the opportunity. At this season, the hump of the camel dwindles away, leaving the skin loose and wrinkled ; an oily, fetid matter exudes from the back of the head, and a reddish membrane, like that over the beak of a turkey-cock, protrudes from one corner of the mouth.

To this succeeds the moult of the hair, after which the animals return to their normal condition of docility and good temper.

The camel lives from twenty to thirty years. The term of gestation of the female is twelve months, during which time she is worked, but with moderation and care. Immediately after its birth, the young camel is swathed in a broad band of linen, to sustain and keep it in form. This bandage is removed upon the fifth or sixth day.

For about a year the young camel is suckled by his dam, following her about at his will. When weaning time comes, they shear off all his hair, and send him to the pastures ; and, at the end of two years, his education begins.

The first lesson consists in putting a halter upon him, the thong of which is attached to one of his feet. In this position he is kept by the hand and voice at first, the voice

alone being sufficient, after a while, to command him. The thong is then removed from his foot, but replaced if he makes a single step—and this discipline is continued until the animal will remain unfettered, for an entire day, in the position in which his master has placed him.

The first result obtained, he is submitted to further trials.

A ring of iron is riveted to one of his nostrils—the right one, generally. To this ring, which is to be worn by him for life, a rein of camel-leather is attached, which, brought up from right to left, is fastened, on his withers, to the thong of the halter, passed up from left to right.

The saddle is now placed upon his back, and the rider mounts. The least touch of the ring-bridle causes the animal to feel such pain that he passively obeys the hand. He is turned to the right, to the left, forced to walk backward, and then to advance—and should some fresh herbage tempt him to lower his head, a sharp jerk brings it back into position.

To teach the animal to kneel down, the rider makes a sound expressible by *ch ! ch ! ch !*—while at the same moment an assistant strikes the camel with a stick—this training being continued until the signal alone is sufficient.

And now the camel's education is looked upon as complete, and his working life commences.

But, to return to our journey. Toward six o'clock the drooping spirits of the caravan seemed to revive. The camels knew that their toil was drawing to a close, announcing, by their wild cries, our approach to water ; soon after which, having skirted by some hills strewn with black pebbles, and defiled through a valley dotted with hillocks, we saw before us a lovely hollow, where palm-trees were growing, and found ourselves entering the oasis in which the town of Kond is situated.

Men and camels now put themselves to their best speed,

and at half-past seven o'clock we reached Kond, on the outskirts of which we found a large, handsome caravansery belonging to the Nagib of the place, around which we established ourselves

CHAPTER XXVII.

CLOSED GATES.—WAR BETWEEN TRIBES OF THE DESERT.—INTRIGUES.
—KOND AND THE KONDITES.

AFTER some necessary refreshment and repose, we went to visit the town, but found the gates closed—and, on inquiry, were informed that the Nagib of the district had departed two days previously, with all his warriors, upon an expedition provoked by an invasion of his territory, leaving none but the sick, the children, the young girls, and the old men in the town, the gates of which were to be kept closed until his return.

The wives, according to the invariable custom of the desert, had followed their husbands to the war-field, to prepare their victuals for them, and keep them in good heart.

When war has been proclaimed between hostile tribes, the women are always the first to encourage the men to rush into combat. If a warrior happens to show any disinclination to go forth, his wife overwhelms him with abuse. She seizes his lance and gun, brandishing them aloft, with loud screams, and, going in this fashion to her father, says to him :

“Until now, I thought you had given me a man for a husband ; but, as I find he is no better than an old woman, I abandon him, and come again to you, in order that you may seek me a husband worthy to be called a husband.”

Every owner of a horse or dromedary is liable to a fine of twenty sheep if he refuses to serve in war time; and every man who owns a gun and does not bring it to the defense of his tribe is mulcted in an amount of ten sheep.

If a warrior deserts his tribe, and goes over to the enemy, his house is burned, his cattle are confiscated, his fields ravaged and laid waste: and if his people ever catch him again, they condemn him to have his head shaved, and to die an ignominious death. Nor does the penalty of treason rest here; for even the family of the traitor is reduced to the uttermost destitution, his wife being allowed to retain nothing except a few rags, and a gourd to go begging with—and such is the rancor with which she and her children are persecuted, that they frequently die from sheer abuse and want.

These war expeditions usually set out at day-break, presenting a very animated scene, from the variety of groups of which they consist.

On one side are the scouts and foot-soldiers, who take up their own line of march. The horsemen ride alongside of the dromedaries on which the women are mounted, or curvet about on their steeds, to show themselves off: while the Nagib and his chiefs have their own part in the procession, planning out the coming battle by the way.

Lastly, come the camels, laden with the tents, baggage, and provisions.

The whole line of march has a disorganized, festive look—every body marching just as he pleases, and all seeming to think of adventure rather than of fatigue, of glory rather than danger. The warriors are bragging of their exploits; the music is playing; the women are uttering their eternal *aiâth-el-ferrâhh*, or cries of joy; and the banging of innumerable matchlocks leaves nothing to be desired in the way of noise. It is a display of barbaric courage, combined with a taste for pillage, such as animated the mercenary troops of the middle ages.

But now the guns are silent ; for a young and handsome horseman has begun to chant one of those love-songs the refrain of which carries the hearer back to those brilliant epochs over which the light of Arab refinement shed such a soft glow—a glow which communicated to Christianity that gentle gallantry which civilized the rude manners of the warrior, and was the foundation of chivalry.

Swallow of the purple wing !
Fly to her of whom I sing :
Spread your wings, and swiftly fly
Unto her for whom I sigh.

For my heart is all aglow,
Houri-haunted now I go :
Would'st thou hear how fair is she ?
I will paint her, lovingly.

Like the moon in heaven above
Shines the fair one whom I love :
Graceful as the young palm-tree
By the running brook is she.

Ever from their silken stay
Her jet-black locks that wildly stray,
Redolent of amber are,
Or of incense from Dhafar.

Ruddy are her lips to see
As the gum-lac on the tree :
And like costly pears her teeth
Peeping from a coral wreath.

And her dark eyes, as they dance,
Wound me with a lightning glance,
Swifter than the shafts that go
From the Abyssinian bow.

O ! how soft her footsteps fell
As she came like a gazelle ;
And the joy my spirit knew
At the evening rendezvous !

Swallow of the purple wing!
Fly to her of whom I sing—
Spread your pinions, now, and fly
Unto her for whom I sigh!

When the heat of the day sets in, they halt, pitch the tents and prepare meals, unsaddle and unpack the horses, dromedaries and camels, and provide them with fodder.

In the cool of the afternoon they resume the march; and, before sunset, the chouafs go forward to reconnoiter, and to select a favorable spot for encamping on during the night—a spot where water, grass, and wood are abundant.

When the evening meal has been dispatched, a sentry is posted at each tent, to guard the baggage and animals from night-prowlers. And, now, overcome by the heat and fatigues of the day, husbands are sleeping heavily in their own compartments of the tents, while wives, according to previous arrangement, either admit their lovers or meet them at some designated place of rendezvous. Now, too, is the hour when revenge is rampant.

General Daumas tells us that:

“The repulsed lover creeps stealthily into the tent of her by whom his proposals have been rejected, approaches her while sleeping, and shoots her dead. There is a starting up at the noise of the pistol-shot, a running to and fro and a tumult of wild cries; but the assassin is seldom detected, and the crime, perpetrated without witnesses, goes unavenged.

“Adventures of this kind are frequent in the desert; for, whether with her leave or without it, the Arab wife ever has her lovers. This results from the excessive jealousy and vexatious restrictions of the husbands, who are all suspicious of their wives.

“The young Arab wife, of whatever rank, passes half her time in devising stratagems to deceive her husband. The old one occupies herself in promoting the intrigues of others.

“These intrigues are usually carried on by the intervention of women who make it their profession, by whose smooth speech and wicked machinations the young wives are seduced from the path of virtue—their love of presents, above all, being made conducive to this result.”

When morning is up, the expedition is again set moving. Scouts are sent in advance to reconnoiter the position of the enemy. They meet with the scouts of the foe: insults are exchanged, and then shots, as a prelude to the general engagement.

The hostile forces are now drawn up opposite to each other, the women taking their places in the rear, ready to excite the combatants by their cries and plaudits. They are protected by the foot-warriors, who form the reserve of the army.

And now the battle commences by the advance of bands of fifteen or twenty horsemen from each side, who dash forward and endeavor to turn the flank of the enemy, while the chief and leaders hold the center ground, at the head of a compact column of their troops. The scene is one of wild animation. The bravest and best mounted of the young horsemen spur madly forward, eager for blood; and chanting their songs, as, with wildly-streaming locks, they rush into the fray, where lance and saber clatter in close *mêlée*.

At length the weaker side retires, falling back upon the dromedaries, on which the women are mounted. Loud cries are now heard from the female division of each army, the women of the victors encouraging them with joyful acclamations, while those of the vanquished set up a howl of anger and imprecation, intended to stimulate the flagging courage of their husbands and brothers.

Sometimes this has its effect, and the retiring force, supported by the firing of the reserve, again gains ground, driving the enemy back upon *their* dromedaries and women, when the plaudits of the latter are turned to imprecations and howls.

Once the battle has been decided, a scene of indiscriminate plunder succeeds; and the victors are seen securing such booty as women, horses, dromedaries, and slaves. They then carry away their wounded, bury their dead, and prepare for the homeward march.

The Arabs make no prisoners, with the exception of women and slaves; nor do they mutilate the wounded of the vanquished, leaving them where they fall, however, to die there, or to drag themselves away if they can. If any rare instance of cruelty takes place on these occasions, it may be traced to some motive of private revenge—an act of retribution upon the recognized assassin of a relative or friend.

Upon their arrival at home the victors are welcomed with fêtes of great splendor. The women draw up their dromedaries in one long, single line, uttering the *aiâth-el-ferrâhh* at regular intervals. The young people perform wild dances before them, the *powder speaks*, and all is congratulation, festivity and joy.

The next duty to be performed is the division of the booty, which is distributed as follows: a tenth to the mosques, a fifth to the Nagib, a third among the chiefs, a fourth among the women and the most distinguished of the warriors, and the remainder equally among all. This done, the community again becomes tranquil, and people return to their usual occupations.

It was about four o'clock when the Nagib and his followers returned from their expedition. Then the gates of Kond were opened, and we were permitted to enter.

Here I found but few buildings of note, except the citadel, in which the Nagib resides; and even this, with its inclosing wall, is in a sad state of ruin. This dilapidation extends to the eight or ten square towers of the citadel, to the two gates, and to the five or six hundred houses of which the town consists, and which are built partly of brick, and partly of mud and stubble. The streets and the three

mosques are also in a rueful plight. At every step are to be seen traces of the devastating Wahabytes—the iconoclasts of the Islam.

The Kondites number about two thousand souls, of which about eighteen hundred are Arabs of the Zeïd sect—the remainder being made up of Mouëllets, Banians, Jews, and Sabians. Like the Wadites, they have but little intercourse with the inhabitants of the surrounding oases.

The appearance of these people, who never wander from their native mountains, is wilder than that of the other inhabitants of the Mareb country. In their costume we miss those brilliant colors in which the other tribes delight—that of men and women being equally destitute of variety. They weave the same tissues as their ancestors wove in the days of Abraham and of Ishmael, and on the same looms, of which Fenelon, in his *Bêtique*, has given such a charming description. These stuffs are of the color of the wool or camel's hair of which they are made—a dirty white, or a rusty black.

As for the Mouëllets, their clothing consists of nothing but a few scanty rags. Like those of Belêd-el-Wadi, they sell their children. I was offered a boy of four years old by one of them for five thalers.

The women, besides the star worn by them at the nose, fasten another to the hair, letting it hang down upon the forehead. They are extremely cunning and sharp in their dealings, and their economy amounts to penuriousness. They have deep, rich complexions, features beautifully regular, and large, dark eyes, full of expression. Their hair, which is very long, is dressed with great care, and their teeth are remarkably white and even. In their well-turned limbs there is displayed an admirable combination of symmetry and strength; and the constant, active occupations in which they exercise themselves endow them with an appearance of robust health. Like all the women in the East, they are passionately fond of ornaments. Tattooing

is not generally practiced among them, but I remarked some who had little patches of it, in blue, on the face.

The territory of Kond, the population of which, including that of the town, amounts to about sixteen thousand, is some twenty leagues in length by two in breadth, making an area of about forty square leagues, which is dotted with numerous villages and hamlets, surrounded by fertile gardens and well-tilled fields. It is watered by the Wadi-Kond, from which the name of the oasis and its capital is taken.

The Wadites raise large numbers of sheep, goats, and camels. They cultivate wheat, millet, barley, apricots, bananas, citrons, dates, gum, garden vegetables, flax, maize, manna, melons, peaches, and grapes. The water of the Wadi-Kond is, ordinarily, sufficient for all the purposes of agriculture—but, in dry season, the fields and gardens are irrigated by means of saquies.

The manufacturing resources of these people are confined to the fabrication of weapons, articles of pottery, and stuffs of wool and of camel's hair.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE NAGIB SÉYD-ABD'EL-RESCHID.—AN ARAB DINNER.—THE WAR OF DAHIS.—THE DAUGHTER OF MEHEMET-ALL.—THE LAST OF HAMZA, AEÏSCHA, AND IBN-ALL.—VISITS.—DEPARTURE FROM KOND.

HAVING explored the town, I went with Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni to visit the Nagib in his citadel, which is a great mass of bricks and mortar, surmounted by imposing battlements.

We first entered a small, flagged court-yard, about which some twenty soldiers were swaggering, or lounging against rusty old iron guns. This led to a larger space, in the center of which stood a building about one hundred feet in length by sixty deep, two stories in height above the ground floor, and crowned by a great terrace with open balustrades, arbored with shrubs, and having a tower of elegant design at each of the four angles.

Séid-Abd'el-Reschid, as this Nagib was named, received us in his apartment of state, surrounded by his chief men. He was a man still in the flower of his age—probably from twenty-five to thirty years old—of expressive features and distinguished air, and tall of stature. He received us with a joyous welcome, for he was in good spirits, having been successful in the expedition from which he had just returned—so that the catechetical examination to be undergone by me turned out to be light and easy.

When that was over, Séid-Abd'el-Reschid invited us to dine with him and his suite, and we followed him to the terrace, where dinner was served for some thirty guests.

First, the *ibricq* was handed round. This is a basin of copper or sheet iron, in which people wash their hands before eating, or, I should rather have said, *over* which—the process being for a slave to hold the vessel with one hand while he pours water from a pitcher over the fingers of the person performing the ablution, who holds his hands over the *ibricq*. Another slave is ready with a cake of soap, while a third stands by with a napkin.

As soon as the *ibricq* had passed all round, the Nagib recited the fatha; and then a large sanie was spread out on the floor, around which we all squatted.

Upon this sanie a bowl of rice soup was first placed, from which each person helped himself with a wooden spoon. After this about twenty different dishes of meat were brought in, one after the other, all of which were dispatched without the aid of knife and fork, luxuries un-

known to the Arabs—for your true Mussulman uses his fingers instead.

For drink, we had pure water, sugared water, and camel's milk, the usual beverages at a Mussulman repast. The second course consisted of *assida* and fruits. Then came coffee; after which we washed our hands again, and all the aristocratic requirements of an Arab dinner party were thus fulfilled.

A Mussulman repast is always conducted in silence, but with the *chicas* and *chiboques* the gift of speech returns, and guests are expected to make themselves agreeable. On this occasion it fell to the lot of Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni and myself, as the stranger guests of the evening, to contribute to the amusement of the party by relating each a story.

The subject selected by the *réis*—and, under the circumstances, happily selected—was the celebrated War of Dahis, to which I have already alluded as having raged for forty years between the ancient tribes of Abs and Dhobyân. I will relate the legend according to the version of M. Noël Desvergers, the eminent orientalist, without adhering, to his text, however.

The dam of the renowned steed Dahis, whose name was Djalwa, belonged to Kirwasch, of the tribe of Béni-Yarbou. His sire, called D'houl-Okkal, was the property of another Arab of the same tribe.

The colt, Dahis, had grown up a courser of rare beauty, when Kaïs, Sheik of the Absides, made a foray upon the douar of the Béni-Yarbou, and carried off the two daughters of Kirwasch, with a hundred camels. The douar at this time was nearly deserted, the warriors and their wives being absent. Among those left behind, however, besides the young girls taken captive, were the two grooms who had charge of Dahis.

Surprised by the unexpected attack of Kaïs, these two young men had barely time to vault upon the back of the horse, from whose legs they were unable to remove the

fetters in their haste—in spite of which he carried them around the douar with such amazing speed, that the horse-men of Kaïs were unable to catch him.

At length one of the captive girls had presence of mind to call out to the grooms that they would find the key of the fetters in the manger, whereupon, urging their steed in that direction, they succeeded in obtaining it, and had unfettered the legs of Dahis before their pursuers came up.

Safe now in the fleetness of their courser, they wheeled round and round with him, close to Kaïs, who, dazzled by his brilliant action, offered the captive daughters of Kirwasch and all the booty taken from the douar in exchange for him. The bargain was struck; Dahis became his property, and he returned with him to his tribe.

Such is the passion of the Arab for horses. For this courser, Kaïs, gave up his captives and abandoned his booty, and Kirwasch, on his return to the douar, thought less of the ransom of his daughters than he did of the loss of his horse.

Some time after Kaïs came into possession of this steed, a match was made without his knowledge to run horses of his against some belonging to Hodhaïfâh, the Sheik of the Béni-Dhobyan. The distance to be run was fixed at fifty arrow-shots, and the prize consisted of four camels of good blood.

Kaïs was displeased when he heard of this match, saying that such things seldom come to any good, and proposing to draw the bet. To this, however, Hodhaïfâh would not consent; but, in order that the contest might be worthy of the contracting parties, he suggested that the distance should be doubled, and the prize raised to twenty camels.

These conditions were agreed to, and the course, of one hundred arrow-shots in length, was marked out in front of the douar of the Béni-Dhobyan. At the end of the course a well was dug, to which the horses were to run, without riders, as on the Italian race-courses at the present day, and the victory was to be adjudged to the horse that first drank of the water.

The horses were now selected by the respective parties to the match, and it need hardly be said that to Dahis was confided the honor of the tribe of Abs.

Forty days were devoted to training the rival steeds, which were brought up to the post at the appointed time—four in number, Dahis and the mare Ghabra against two belonging to Hodhaïfâh.

At the start the latter appeared to have the advantage, and already their owner, as he and Kaïs followed the race, jeered at the latter for being beaten so easily.

But the Abside chief calmly said: "Be not rash; speed has it now, but wait until they get into the heavy ground!"

These words, which have passed into a proverb, were prophetic; for soon the nature of the ground changed, and no sooner had the horses got into the sandy stretch than the strength of Dahis and Ghabra began to tell against the fleetness of their younger rivals, past whom they soon sped.

They had nearly reached the goal, and Dahis was coming in winner, when he was defeated by the premeditated treachery of the Béni-Dhobyan, some men of which tribe rushed from a ravine where they had concealed themselves, and stopped the horse until the coursers of Hodhaïfâh had passed by. Such was his speed, however, that when they again let him go, thinking that they had nothing now to fear from him, he came up with his rivals, by a desperate effort, and might yet have defeated them had not another band of the traitor Dhobyanites appeared from behind the well, from which they drove away the coursers of Kaïs until those of Hodhaïfâh had drank at it.

Kaïs complained bitterly of this base treachery, but the Béni-Dhobyan refused to make him any compensation, and he had either to swallow the insult or obtain redress for it by force of arms.

But the Absides present on this occasion were few in number, and in the power of their rivals, on whose ground

they were. Smothering their indignation, then, they retired, bent upon speedy revenge.

A short time after this event, Auf, a brother of Hodhaïfâh, was captured by Kaïs, who put him to death and led away his camels. And now commenced an era of reprisals, assassinations, and plunder, which, as the tradition tells us, threatened to lead to the extinction of both tribes.

At length, Rabi, son of Ziad and Fathma, determined to put an end to these hostilities, by offering to pay one hundred camels down, in expiation of the death of Auf. This offer was accepted—and, for some time, peace appeared to be again established between the Absides and the Béni-Dhobyan.

Four years had thus rolled away, when, notwithstanding the important service thus rendered to the Absides by Rabi, Kaïs, their sheik, quarreled with him about a coat of mail, to which they each laid claim. The result of this difference was, that Rabi went over to the tribe of Béni-Fazarâh, a branch of the Béni-Dhobyan, among whom he met with a hospitable reception.

One evening, as he sat in the tent of Hodhaïfâh, whose sister he had married, his brother-in-law, in the course of conversation, gave utterance to sentiments of disrespect toward Kaïs, upon which Rabi fired up, all his former affection for the chief of his tribe awakening from its slumber. Casting back the words of reproach at the speaker, he left the tent, went straight to where his horse was tethered, caressed the animal and shook out its mane, and then, seizing his lance, which stood upright in the sand beside his tent, brandished it over his head in token of defiance, and replaced it.

His young wife approached him, but he repulsed her, for vengeance had the mastery over his spirit, not love.

Spies had already been set upon his movements by Hodhaïfâh. A young slave, concealed beneath the curtain of

the tent, had observed his actions, and reported to his master that Rabi could no longer be reckoned on as a friend of the Béni-Dhobyen.

Next morning at daybreak, Rabi sought his brother-in-law, and said to him: "Name a time during which I may still enjoy the privileges of a guest, for I am about to renounce your hospitality."

Three days were accorded to him, at the expiration of which the son of Ziad and Fathma set forth on his journey, taking with him a goat-skin bottle full of wine—for in those days wine was drunk.

Hodhaïfâh, notified of this circumstance, said to the horsemen whom he sent after him:

"If you do not catch the fugitive within three days, return. Observe with care, however, such traces as appear by the way. If wine has been spilt, further pursuit will be hopeless—for that will tell of haste, and the rider must be beyond your reach. If, on the contrary, you find that he has halted for refreshment, spur onward, and you may yet stay him."

Thus instructed, the horsemen followed upon Rabi's track; nor had they gone many miles when they saw traces of wine spilled out upon the sand, for the fugitive had ripped open his wine-bottle to lighten the burden of his steed. Further pursuit was abandoned. Rabi had made good his escape.

Hardly had he become reconciled to Kaïs, when they both put themselves at the head of the Absides, and, advancing upon the Béni-Fazarâh, cut them to pieces, an event which raised up in arms the whole tribe of Dhobyen. The latter assembled in the valley of Safa, near Mecca, in such overwhelming numbers that the Absides, who were compelled to retreat before them, found themselves obliged to demand a truce and give hostages, contrary, however, to the advice of Rabi, who counseled them to give battle.

But Kaïs insisting upon a truce, they sent, as hostages, six young lads of the tribe, who were taken in charge by Zobe'ir, another brother-in-law of Hodhaïfâh.

Over these hostages Zobe'ir watched while he lived, and when he found his last hour approaching, he called for his son, Mélick, and said to him :

“I leave unto you an illustrious rank, a glory imperishable, if you but know how to maintain it ; but that glory depends upon these young hostages. Watch over them with vigilance ; for even now I have a vision of your uncle Hodhaïfâh coming to you with hypocritical lamentations for my death, and wheedling you, in his wily way, to deliver up the hostages to his vengeance. Never, O ! my son, consent to do this, else shall your good name perish.”

Soon after Zobe'ir had breathed his last, the sheik of the Béni-Dhobyan realized the presentiments of the deceased, by wheedling Mélick, in his wily way, until he induced him to give up the eight hostages whom he led away to his dwelling.

Every morning, for eight days after this, he took one of these youths, and, tying him up at a distance of some paces, shot him through and through with arrows.

The fury with which the news of this atrocity was received by the Absides may be imagined. They came down upon the Béni-Dhobyan with all their warriors, slaying, in the first onset, many of their horsemen, among others Mélick, by whose weakness the hostages had fallen into the hands of Hodhaïfâh.

A few days after this, another engagement took place between the rival tribes. The day was one of intense heat. They fought from daybreak to noon, not far from the tank called Habâha, both tribes withdrawing then to seek refuge from the burning sun. Now Kaïs knew that Hodhaïfâh, a corpulent man, must have suffered much from the heat and turmoil of the fight, and he said to his people :

"Hodhaïfâh is probably gone in search of water; let us throw ourselves upon his tracks and surprise him."

They soon found the track which led them to the tank, where Hodhaïfâh and one of his cousins, whose name was Hamal, were at that moment taking their repose.

Suddenly the latter, who was gifted with remarkable powers of sight, turned toward his chief, saying :

"Of all your enemies, whom should you least like to behold standing over you as you sit here unarmed?"

"Kaïs and Rabi," replied Hodhaïfâh.

"Look, then!" cried Hamal, "for here they come."

And, as he spoke, Kaïs and Rabi came upon them, echoing, with their shouts, the cries of the youthful hostages pierced by the arrows of Hodhaïfâh.

Hamal was about to implore mercy from their captors, but his cousin rebuked him for his cowardice, and said to the Abside chiefs :

"If you kill me, peace can never again be established between our tribes."

"Heaven forbid that it ever should be!" exclaimed Kaïs, as he drove his broad lance through the body of his enemy, while Rabi cut down Hamal with his sword.

This act of vengeance was a balm upon the wounds received by the Absides from their foes. Nevertheless, it made their position more precarious than ever, by raising up against them all the allies of the Béni-Dhobyan; on which account they went to dwell among their kinsmen, the tribe of Béni-Hanifâh, whom they soon left and went among those of Béni-Sad.

Finding that they were likely to be betrayed by the latter, however, they again sought safety in flight, quitting their encampment in the night time, after having kindled fires, as usual, so as to lull the suspicions of their perfidious hosts. The women, children, and baggage were sent on in advance, and the horsemen posted themselves in the pass of El-Fourouck, to await the pursuit of the Sadites,

At the break of day the latter threw themselves upon the camp of the Absides, but, finding it deserted, they followed upon the tracks of the fugitives, which soon led them to El-Fourouck.

Antar, the hero of the Arab epic, the Amadis of the East, whose adventures are sung in the market-places of the towns and the tents of the desert alike—this Antar, who was one of the authors of the *moallakas*, or poems written in ink of gold and suspended on the walls of the Kâaba, before the epoch of Islam, sang also of the battle of El-Fourouck. He had already broken more than one lance in the war of Dahis; and, in this famous conflict, he lent his powerful aid to the discomfiture of his foe.

After this the tribe of Abs went to dwell near that of Béni-Dobbâh. By this time weariness of the protracted war had taken possession of both the hostile tribes. Negotiations were entered into, and all things appeared to favor a peace so long deferred, when a Dhobyante, whose father had fallen by the hand of Antar, revenged himself by slaying Scheddad, the father of that hero, falling upon him unawares.

From this arose a renewal of hostilities. Recourse was again had to arms, but not with the same enthusiasm as formerly; and this new cause of quarrel was finally atoned for by payment of two hundred camels, on which peace at length was firmly established between the tribes of Abs and Béni-Dhobyant.

This is the substance of the story told by the réis. It was now my turn to speak, and I recounted the scandals told of a daughter of Mehemet-Ali, a second Margaret of Burgundy, who, when tired of her lovers, caused them to be sewn up in sacks and dropped into the Nile.

On our return to the encampment we heard of an event to which many of us had been looking forward as likely to take place sooner or later, but which came, nevertheless, with something of a shock,

The man Ibn-Ali, unsuccessful in his attempts to impose upon Hamza, who, acting on my advice, returned his miraculous ruby and forbade him from coming to his tent, resolved to have his revenge.

Watching his opportunity, he entered the tent while Hamza was absent at Kond, violated and strangled the beautiful Aeïsha, and carried off her jewels and ornaments. But he was followed, and shot dead by Hamza, who, unable to endure the sorrow brought upon him by the loss of his wife, soon after put an end to his own existence.*

These events made such an impression upon me, that I passed a sleepless night.

When morning came, the funeral obsequies were arranged. Those of Aeïsha and Hamza were conducted with much splendor, and they were interred in holy ground. But the corpse of Ibn-Ali was cast without ceremony into a trench dug at some distance from the camp. It should have been cast to the hyenas and jackals.

After the interment, the sale of the effects of the deceased took place, the produce of which was given to the réis, to be remitted to their family, or, in default of such, handed over to the revenue and mosques of the country from which they came.

At three o'clock I had a visit from some of the chief men of Kond, among whom were some Jews, who came, ostensibly, to consult me on medical subjects—in reality, I suspect, from motives of espionage.

I offered them pipes and coffee; and we conversed for

* Instances of self-destruction are so rare among the Mussulmans as to be almost unknown. The doctrines of universality of soul and metempsychosis, in fact, have found but little favor among them, owing, probably, to their religion and mode of life. It was so with the Chaldeans, Persians, and Hebrews of ancient times. The latter, especially, had such a horror of self-murder, that but eight or ten instances of suicide can be found in their annals, extending over a space of four thousand years.

some time, chiefly about the Nagib, in whose praise they were very eloquent—although most of them, I believe, would have rejoiced greatly to have seen him hanged.

While I was undergoing an examination by these inquisitive Arabs, Séid-Abd'el-Reschid arrived, with five or six of his suite. We all rose at his approach, but seated ourselves again as soon as he had squatted himself upon a carpet placed for him, with the exception of the Jews, who remained standing in an abject attitude, with knees half-bent and supplicatory hands.

In no country, perhaps, are the Jews treated with more contempt and contumely than in the East. As an example I will cite the case of the Jewish carter at Tunis, so lately as the first of July, 1857, who, having dared to reply to insults heaped upon him by some outcasts of that abject people, the Moors, was thrown into prison, from whence he was dragged forth by the populace, and cut to pieces.

Nevertheless, the Mussulman has frequent recourse to the Jew, to extricate him from his financial difficulties—allowing him to accumulate, until the proper time comes, when he pounces upon him, and compels him to disgorge his gains to the last coin.

The object of the Nagib's visit was to thank the réis and myself for our stories of the evening before, and to take leave of us. Soon after he retired two of his black slaves came in, bringing provisions for my journey and several purses, and receiving from me in return a backsheesh for themselves and a present for their master.

We struck tents earlier than usual to-day, starting before sunset, with the intention of clearing, in one stage, the fifteen leagues between Kond and Olû-Yahseb—our caravan being reinforced by twenty camels and ten Kondites, who were bound with us as far as Doân.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLEAR MOONLIGHT.—SOUCK.—OLÛ-YASEB.—EN ROUTE FOR THE DESERT.

OUR course lay along the left bank of the Wadi-Kond for about half a league, when we passed over to the other side, and crossing some barren hills, found ourselves upon a sandy plain. Having traversed this, we ascended a steep mountain, from which we could trace, in the bright moonlight, the course of the river just mentioned.

These moonlight nights in Mareb and Hadramaut are of surpassing beauty and brilliancy. *Nedjem-Selthana*, or the queen-star, as the Arabs call the moon, shines here with such clearness, that not only could I read easily by her light in the open air, but, even in my tent, which was made of strong, double cloth, could make out good-sized print, such as the title of a book. The wonderful transparency of the atmosphere of these mountains is caused, probably, by their remoteness from the sea, and consequent immunity from the mists and fogs in which the coasts are so often enveloped.

After leaving the mountain, our road became very difficult, now leading through ravines where we were obliged to pass in single file, now cut out upon the face of some abrupt precipice.

The country through which we passed appeared to be populous and well-cultivated. On all sides were to be heard the bleating of sheep and the bark of dogs.

It was about one in the morning when we arrived at Souck, a village situated about half way between Kond and Olû-Yaseb, at the entrance of which we halted. Souck means *a fair*. There are hundreds of villages in Arabia so called, from the weekly markets held at them.

The Bedouins have neither shops nor bazaars, all their business being transacted in the open air. They start at early morning, or, sometimes, the night before, for the market-town, where business is in full operation from seven or eight o'clock. From two to three thousand Bedouins are often assembled at one of these markets.

They range themselves in order, according to the kind of merchandise they have for sale. Horses have one place assigned to them; dromedaries, camels, asses, mules, sheep, and goats another; while elsewhere are to be found the dealers in wool and camel's hair, and those who trade in butter, vegetables, and fruits.

The Sabians, Mouëllets, Banians, and Jews disperse themselves through the throng, dealing in salt, pottery-ware, silk, and other stuffs.

Few scenes are more animated than a Bedouin market. Horses fighting and screaming; camels and dromedaries poking about with their long necks, in every direction; mules and asses trying to get rid of their burdens by rolling on the ground; other dumb beasts waiting patiently for new masters, while ever and anon they are aroused by cracks of a courbash from the repose so necessary to them after their fatiguing journey; men shouldering to and fro, with their abbayes tucked up to leave their limbs free, or counting on their fingers the sum demanded by them for some object of trade; children quarreling, or forcing their services upon the stranger—all this, when viewed by a European for the first time, is somewhat distracting to the senses, and may, not unaptly, be compared to a swarm of bees at work on a bed of flowers.

This village of Souck, situated on the northern verge of the oasis of Kond, and having a population of between three and four hundred souls, is watered by a small stream, running, like all the rivers of this country, from northwest to southeast. It covers a considerable extent of ground, two thirds of it being built in the form of an amphitheater,

and the remainder on the level plain. The houses, which are all of stone, have but one floor, exclusive of the terraced roof. They all have gardens, planted with fruit-trees.

Gigantic mountains rear their heads over all, the sides of which are partially cultivated, but their summits bald and sterile. On some of these barren pinnacles are to be seen the remains of old castles, assigned, by popular tradition, to the early times of the Tobbas.

At two o'clock we resumed the route for Olû-Yaseb, which we reached at six—dismounting at the entrance of the town around a small caravansery, which belonged to the Nagib of the territory.

This last stretch was an extremely fatiguing one, our road, all the way from Souck, winding among stony hills of the most savage character. As soon as my tent was pitched, I flung myself down on the cushions, to snatch some repose while breakfast was in preparation.

By and by, I went with some of my companions to visit the town, the gates of which were now open. The gates of an Arab town are always shut at the hour of evening prayer, remaining closed all night, until the Salat-el-Fedjer, or morning prayer, except in cases of great emergency—and, even then, the wickets of the gates, only, are allowed to be opened.

The town of Olû-Yaseb is of diamond form, bounded on the west by mountains, on the north and east by sandy hills—the advanced posts of the immense solitude called the Roba-el-Khaly, or Great Desert of Arabia, and the sands of El-Akhâf. In the center of this diamond, which is enclosed by a wall having a gate at each of its four angles, stands the citadel, in which the Nagib resides, near which is a mosque, the only one in the town. The gates at the acute angles of the diamond look toward Kond and Derreyêh, respectively; those at the others toward Mecca and Doân.

The houses, which are high and pierced with loop-holes, attesting the warlike character of the people, are built in the form of quadrangular truncated pyramids. The masonry is of dry stone, the interstices of which are filled up with pebbles brought from the banks of the pleasant stream by which the oasis is watered. The doors, formed of the single trunk of a mossouack or palm, roughly hewn out with the ax, are but four feet high by one wide: the windows, which are also very narrow, are faced with quartz of sparkling whiteness.

These turret-shaped houses all have terraced roofs, and about the base of many of them are to be seen low, square buildings, in which the inhabitants keep their cattle and store their grain.

The population of Olû-Yaseb is about two thousand, of which twelve hundred are Sabians, seven hundred Bedouins, and one hundred Jews and Mouëllets.

Groves of palm-trees grow along the banks of the stream, the bed of which, composed of the finest sand, is as even and uniform in breadth as that of a skillfully constructed canal.

The saquies consist simply of excavations on the banks of the stream, fitted with swing gates, through which the water is admitted into the trenches by which the fields are irrigated.

Grapes, figs, melons, millet, clover, and maize are produced here in great abundance.

Olû-Yaseb, altogether, is a pleasant, fertile spot, and hence it was that the Wahabytes thought fit to possess themselves of and fortify it, lying, as it does, upon the route leading from Doân and Mareb to Mecca, through the oases of Dowasser, Schehran, Sobeyêh, and Tayêf.

The Bedouins who inhabit this town, at the present day, are still of the great tribe of Béni-Schiddad. Their principal trade is with the great caravan of pilgrims that passes here annually on the route from eastern Arabia to Mecca. It is

usual for the traders to join these pilgrims, transacting business with them by the way, and winding up affairs when they have reached their destination.

Dates are exported, in large quantities, from Olû-Yaseb to Mareb. When this fruit is unusually abundant, the Yasebites carry it direct to Kassr-el-Nad, selling it by the way to the Arabs through whose territories they pass, who, previously notified of their time of coming, await them at the several halting-places.

The Nagib of this oasis, like his *confrère* at Kousen, was sick, on which account I did not visit him—a matter which did not fill me with any very poignant regret.

On returning to the camp, I found our people engaged in emptying and airing the water-bottles, preparatory to filling them with fresh water from the limpid stream. The rest of the day was employed at this work, and in procuring a new stock of provisions. For this was to be our last opportunity for doing so until we should reach Doân, a distance of seventy-two leagues of awful desert.

It was no wonder, then, that the *réis* was even more solicitous and exact than usual, as he issued his orders and superintended the various departments. Just before our departure, he again summoned us around him, and addressed us as follows :

“Be not impatient of my warnings, for I can not repeat them too often.

“Drink not in the morning, on a fasting stomach, else shall you be thirsty for the remainder of the day.

“Never drink until you have rested for a few minutes, and, above all, beware of drinking water that has been disturbed by carriage and warmed by the sun until after it has been exposed a moment to the air.

“Drink but twice a-day.

“No rashness! no imprudence! Opening before us are the sands of El-Akhâf, where the least indiscretion will be quickly fatal.

“Be economical of the water.

“If the simoom should overtake us and shrivel up our water-bottles, abstain from eating dates. It is safer to slake your thirst with the juice of an onion, or by swallowing three or four mouthfuls of butter. You may not, perhaps, completely assuage your thirst by so doing, but you will, at least, deceive it and gain time.

“Or the mouth may be kept moist, for a while, by holding a leaden bullet in it.

“Remember, too, that a man can exist for two entire days without drinking, and, if it comes to the worst, we can sacrifice one of our camels for the sake of the water for which Allah has provided him with a reservoir in his stomach.

“Lastly, O! my children, eat neither of pillau nor of cold victuals; and beware always of eating to excess. For cold victuals are difficult of digestion, and excessive eating is a sure cause of dysentery, which may end in death.

“Go now, and may Allah prolong your lives!”

This said, the caravan once more moved onward, and soon after we found ourselves on the edge of the actual, awful desert.

CHAPTER XXX.

A STRANGE ARAB.—IN THE DESERT.—MYSTERY OF ABD'EL-MÉLICK.

I HAVE mentioned that, on leaving Kond, we were joined by ten strangers bound for Doân.

Among these I was particularly struck with the voice and manners of a young Arab, whose appearance was much superior to that of his comrades, over whom he appeared to exercise considerable influence. Nor could I help observing

the interest taken in him by a fine-looking old man, with snowy locks, who watched over him with the solicitude of a mother for her child.

This young Bedouin, although of swarthy complexion, resembled the European type rather than that of the children of the desert. His name was Abd'el-Mélick, and his age, probably, twenty-two or twenty-three years.

Notwithstanding his humble position—he was a camel-driver—there was a certain air of dignity about him, a propriety of costume and address, indicative of good descent. His weapons were richly carved and mounted, and he wore them, as well as his abbaye, with a certain jauntiness and grace quite in keeping with his handsome person, which was already well set off by the splendid black hair that fell in heavy locks upon his bare shoulders. A high forehead, large, dark eyes, tinted round the lids with koh'ol, and gleaming with intellect and courage; finely-cut features, wearing a frank and open expression, and a slender, but well-knit figure, combined to make this camel-driver a man of decidedly distinguished appearance.

Surprised to see this young man in a position evidently so far below his capacity, I formed a project of befriending him, with a view to bettering his prospects, while he, by intuition, perhaps, appeared to attach himself to me. I deferred questioning him, however, until our first halt, when I would learn his history, if possible.

Between seven and eight in the morning we came to three or four wells of stagnant, brackish water, near which we halted and pitched our tents. The country all around us was of strange, sterile aspect. Neither tree was to be seen, nor plant of any description, excepting the long, dry, shriveled blades of grass that stood out upon the horizon.

Far as eye could reach, the ground stretched away in uniform yellow waves, like petrified billows. I know of nothing to which I can compare this waste, of which some

idea may be formed, however, by imagining the ocean transformed into a region of sand-hills, like those about Dunkirk, or on the sterile downs of Brittany.

In this wilderness of sand there exist a few wandering hordes of savages, called by the Arabs *Khafir-el-Arianin*—naked infidels, who roam the unknown wastes, coming and going, nobody can tell when or where.

The flocks of these weird people follow them. Their dromedaries, mounted by chouafs, go before.

There being no roads, no permanent tracks in this vast space, which is ever shifting, and yet always the same, these hardy pioneers of the desert leave conventional marks behind them, as finger-posts to those who follow—particular signs being adopted by them to indicate where water is to be found.

When a halt has been decided on, those in advance wait until all have come up, when a sort of douar is established—a settlement which may last for a week, perhaps, and every trace of which will then be obliterated by a few blasts of wind.

So far as is known of the manners and customs maintaining in these Asiatic wigwams, rapacity, violence, and brutal instinct have full sway among their degraded occupants, who are so nearly allied to beasts as to eat their victuals raw.

As soon as we had established ourselves at this halting-place, and while Mohammed was preparing coffee, I sent Selim to invite Abd'el-Mélick and his mentor, whose name was Nassib, to come to my tent. For coffee is the greatest treat one can offer to an Arab, giving one, besides, an opportunity of originating any desired subject of conversation, like the snuff-box in our own circles.

While we sat over our coffee, and the smoke went curling up from chica and chiboque, I gradually led the conversation to the turn I wished it to take. Addressing Abd'el-Mélick, I asked him whether he did not aspire to

something better than the dreary business of a camel-driver, offering, if it so suited him, to take him with me on my travels.

To this offer he replied frankly. His parents, he said, had died while he was so young that he hardly remembered them, since which bereavement Nassib had been to him in the place of a father. Nassib had taught him to know good from evil; had inured him to the privations, fatigues, and dangers of the desert; taught him to despise sloth and abhor cowardice. He was happy in his present position, and had no desire to exchange it for a new one, in which he might contract habits and vices, and experience wants, that would only render him miserable.

"Brought up in the midst of the Bedouins," continued he, "I have become a Bedouin, and no matter where I might go, a Bedouin still I should be unless I became something worse. How much better for me, then, to remain what I am than to aim at some position for which destiny never intended me!"

"Well said, my son!" exclaimed Nassib—"your words are the offspring of sound sense and a brave heart."

Then, turning toward me, he continued:

"Abd'el-Mélick knows not who his parents were, for they died while he was yet an infant. He knows not even of what faith they were, because up to the present moment I have refrained from speaking much about them, knowing that the narrative of their misfortunes would bring but trouble to him.

"But now I feel that the hour is come for me to speak out and relate the circumstances under which he came to be my ward—born, as he was, of distinguished parents.

"Some five-and-twenty years ago a nobleman of European race came to dwell at Sana.

"Wealthy, liberal, and endowed with useful knowledge, Ali, as he was called, soon became the center of an admiring circle. The Imaum himself, then in the decline of his age,

sought his friendship, taking frequent counsel with him for the repression of the anarchy by which his dominions were desolated. Eventually he appointed him his *fakîh* or vizier, and, feeling that his time on earth was nearly run out, he gave Fathma, the youngest and handsomest of his daughters, in marriage to him, and appointed him guardian to his successor, a youth of tender years.

“Of this union, which was not destined to be a happy one, a son was born. Abd’el-Mélick is that son.

“Two years after that event the Imaum was gathered to his fathers, and his successor found himself in immediate strife with a powerful antagonist, a pretender to the principality of Yémen, who, thanks to the valor of Fakîh-Ali, however, was kept for some time at bay.

“About this time the Pacha of Egypt received orders from the Porte to send troops to Nedjêd, for the purpose of chastising the Wahabytes, who had plundered the holy towns of Medina and Mecca.

“In obedience to this call, Mehemet-Ali sent thither his son Ibrahim, who acquitted himself bravely of the mission thus confided to him.

“But the power of the reformers of Derreyêh, although annihilated on the spot where it grew, sprang into new life elsewhere.

“Near the borders of Hedjaz and of the Imaumate of Sana, dwell many warlike tribes, among whom the doctrines of Wahab have taken deep root. These tribes are included under the general denomination of Assir, a name by which their territory also is known.

“The union of the Wahabytes, annihilated in Nedjêd, threatened to regenerate itself among these tribes of Assir—a combination which Mehemet-Ali determined to oppose by every means in his power. In meditating a new war, however, the designs of the Pacha were politic, for he had long had in view the subjugation of the whole peninsula of Arabia, to accomplish which it was necessary to guard against

a revival of the Wahabyte power, the object of that sect being the reconstruction of the nationality of the Arab race.

“The aim of this ambitious prince was to possess himself, in the first place, of all the sea-board towns, which secured, he could easily penetrate into the interior of the country, and establish a system of tribute among the tribes. He gazed particularly, with greedy eyes, upon the ports of Yémen and Oman—those happy lands upon which nature has showered her favors, and in which he saw the keys of the Indian Ocean and of the Persian Gulf.

“From thence he supposed that he could grasp all the region comprised between the Red Sea, the Euphrates, and his possessions in Syria, with the addition of which vast territory his empire would become one of the most powerful of Asia. The Red Sea would be nothing but a lake of Egypt, and the flag of the Pacha flaunt proudly upon the neighboring oceans.

“Abandoning Egypt, then, he penetrated into our sandy territories, with the fixed determination to bring us under his yoke. But courage and patriotism were not yet extinct among us, and we swore war to the death for our country and liberty.

“Nevertheless, it did not please Allah to balance the scales of war in our favor. Mehemet-Ali took possession of our western towns, our people and our property, establishing a tax of one-fortieth on all that belonged to us, according to the law of the Prophet.

“After some days of repose for his troops, the conqueror directed his course towards the mountains of Assir, whither we were obliged to follow, and assist at the downfall of our countrymen.

“This conquest effected, he was about to lead us on to that of Oman, when he found himself obliged to return suddenly to Egypt, a rumor having come to him that the Porte had designs upon his dominions.

“In the following year all the tribes that had been sub-

dued by Mehemet-Ali rebelled, refusing to bring their contributions to the garrisons left by him in occupation of the country, attacking them and driving them away with ignominy. For the tribes could no longer endure the grievous levies made upon their fields and gardens, flocks and herds—the best part of the produce of which they had been forced to contribute to the revenues of a stranger, and, worse than all, a Turk.

“Hassan-Pacha, at that time governor of Hedjaz, notified the Pacha of what was going on in the mountains, upon which Mehemet-Ali dispatched troops to his assistance, with instructions to reduce us to obedience.

“At the head of these troops—a strong army of horse and foot—Hassan-Pacha lost no time in advancing upon our territories, his approach being announced to us by our spies.

“This news, however, instead of striking us with consternation, infused new energy into the preparations made by us for our defense.

“A call to arms was circulated among all the contingents of the Imaumate, who abandoned all to respond to it, and joined us at the appointed time.

“Then there was burnishing of swords and lances; horse-trappings were examined and repaired, and double rations of raw meat were dealt out by the warriors to their war-steeds.

“The sheiks laid out their plans of attack. All was ardor and anxiety to meet the foe.

“At length one morning, a few minutes after the Salat-el-Fedjer, a long bar of dust announced the approach of the hostile army.

“We flew to arms. A battle was fought, but again our undisciplined valor was of no avail against the imperturbable columns of the Turk.

“After this terrible check, our Arab allies deserted us faster than they had come to our call; and haggard solitude

again brooded over the regions that had so lately rung with our war-cries, with the jeering songs of the victors and the groans of the vanquished.

“The young Imaum and Fakîh-Ali had much ado to collect a force of three hundred men, with which they entrenched themselves, together with their families and treasures, in the citadel of Sana, trusting that the well-stored magazines and wells of that stronghold would enable them to keep possession of it for a long time.

“Among our people the strongest is always the most respected; and so it was that our contingents basely ranged themselves under the banner of the pretender already mentioned, who had again entered the field, and joined his forces to those of the Turk.

“This person having persuaded Hassan-Pacha that the young Imam and Fakîh-Ali were the sole instigators of the revolt, the latter knew that they could now expect no mercy if captured. They determined, therefore, to remain ensconced in the citadel, and to die sword in hand rather than deliver themselves up to an ignominious death.

“Three days after the battle, the Turks having recovered from their fatigues, Hassan-Pacha sent one of his aides-de-camp to parley with us.

“Fakîh-Ali ascended the ramparts and made signs to the Egyptian to approach; whereupon the latter launched into the citadel a *djérid* (stick made of palm-tree wood) with a piece of paper rolled round one end of it, and, wheeling his horse round, rode away at full gallop.

“On opening the missive Fakîh-Ali read as follows:

“‘Imaum and Vizier, if you surrender not at discretion before the Salat-el-Encha, this night shall be the last for you and yours.’

“The contents of this letter he communicated to none but the Imaum and myself—for I was his equerry, and in his confidence.

“Shortly after the delivery of the missive the same aide-

de-camp galloped up again, to whom Fakih-Ali sped back the djérid, with this reply attached to it :

“ ‘ Hassan,* you know that these walls are only of brick, but you have yet to learn that our arms are of iron.’ ”

“ Early next morning we saw from one hundred to one hundred and fifty Arnaut soldiers debouching through the gardens in independent order. These sharp-shooters were the advanced guard of the Pacha, who was coming in full force to lay siege to the citadel.

“ This was only what we expected. But it cut us to the heart to see our contingents leagued with him for our destruction.

“ The first day we did little beyond keeping up an occasional firing of musketry, while the enemy appeared disinclined to return our attack. On the fourth or fifth day, however, they opened upon us with the thunder of their artillery.

“ Unfortunately for us, we were unable to respond to this call, for our guns were past service.

“ One morning, as I was reciting my prayer in a small chamber where I was lodged, I heard a loud crash on the roof above, and, in an instant, a great mass of iron fell to the floor, within two yards of me, where it exploded with destructive force, from the effects of which I was preserved, however, by my good angel.

“ The Turks had commenced to attack us with shells.

“ In a moment the young Imaum and Fakih-Ali ascended the ramparts, for consternation had seized upon our people, and it needed all their authority to preserve discipline among them.

“ Two of our men, relatives of mine, were instructed by Fakih-Ali to render the shells harmless by snatching away

* The Bedouins have but little respect for ceremony. In speaking to the Turkish and other dignitaries they address them simply by name, without adding titles.

the fuse from them as they fell—a dangerous duty which they performed with extraordinary adroitness and audacity. Nevertheless, many of these missiles exploded, and dealt destruction around.’

“One evening, after a day of more than usual discomfiture, Fakih-Ali summoned the garrison around him, and said :

“‘My friends, I have devised a method by which we can preserve ourselves from the effects of these infernal machines. Stop with clay all the vents through which the rain water is let out of the citadel, so as to make the court-yard water-tight.’

“We executed his orders without knowing his object, but, when all was done, he continued :

“‘Now draw up water from the wells, and pour it out into the court-yard.’

“In three or four hours the water was knee-deep, and we had little further to fear from the Turkish shells.

“The enemy, surprised at our indifference to their missiles, were at a loss to conjecture the cause. One of our people, however, who had lately married a young and handsome wife, stole out of the citadel one night to visit her, and was surprised and captured by some Arnauts, on his return at daylight.

“This man, when brought before Hassan-Pacha and interrogated, was induced to reveal our strategem with regard to the shells; on learning which, that leader altered his plan of attack.

“He caused a mine to be excavated beneath the citadel; and the fatal moment for the explosion was already at hand, when a great tempest arose, causing the earth around the excavation to fall in, and destroying the preparations for blowing us into the air.

“By this time we had destroyed a great many of the besieging force. At night we used to repair the breaches caused by the artillery during the day—so that, when morn-

ing dawned, the Turks used to find their work of the previous day of no avail.

“At length, after many fruitless assaults and much loss, Hassan-Pacha, incensed by his failures, again sent the horseman with the djérid, to inform us that unless we surrendered before the morrow, he would burn the town and put all its inhabitants to the sword.

“Upon receiving this message our leaders saw that it would be useless to hold out any longer; and they agreed to surrender upon an honorable capitulation that had already been offered to them from day to day.

“But their valorous defense did not save them from destruction; for they were renounced by the Sanites, who delivered them up to the pretender, by whom they were put to death.

“Fathma was condemned to the same fate; but I enabled her and her child to escape to Kond, of which place I am a native. There she died soon after, broken-hearted and bowed down with grief, beseeching me, with her last breath, to watch over the young Abd’el-Mélick, and to stand to him in the place of a father—which I have done to the present day, as you have heard from his own lips.

“And, in evidence of the truth of what I have told you, behold this ring, which I took from the left hand of Fakih-Ali, after his death.”

With these words, he drew from the little finger of his right hand a gold wedding-ring, upon examining which I found the following initials engraved within it:

M. P. — A. F.

I sought further information from Nassib with regard to this mystery, but he either could not, or would not answer my questions; and I was unable either to discover the real name of the unfortunate Fakih-Ali or to persuade his son to remain with me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OUR SECOND TRIBUTE.—STRIFE.—OSTRICH HUNTING.—ARRIVAL AT THE SEAS OF SAND.

ONCE more *en route*, the first few leagues of our eleventh stage were toiled over without adventure ; but, just as the first rays of the sun began to appear above the horizon, some of our chouafs gave signals of alarm, upon which instructions were passed along for us to concentrate and be upon our guard.

Nor did this warning come too soon—for already several Khafir-el-Arianin, scantily clad in a few miserable rags, showed themselves above the ridges of sand.

Most of these men were tall of stature, well proportioned, and of proud bearing. Some of them carried on their shoulders long matchlocks with damaskeened barrels ; while the girdles of all were stuck full of quaintly devised weapons, and their heads protected by a *coiffure* of picturesque effect. They were quickly joined by others of their people, until their number exceeded ours.

To inspire them with some respect for us, then, we ranged ourselves in single rank, making a great display with our matchlocks and lances, and a defiant clatter with our swords ; notwithstanding which, the Khafir-el-Arianin continued to advance. Our chouafs, alone, went to meet them, halting when they had gone about half way, upon which the strangers, also, halted, as if expecting us to commence hostilities.

Then Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni thought proper to send an envoy to parley with them—a move to which they responded by sending one of their people to meet him. These negotiators soon appeared to have come to an understanding with each other, for, after a short parley, they returned to their re-

spective sides, and the women of the Khafir-el-Arianin then came over to the caravan, without any signs of distrust, bringing milk, which they offered to us. For this, however, they demanded an exorbitant price—further evincing their rapacity by insisting upon having a share of the article after we had bought it.

But the réis hit upon an expedient for delivering us from this exaction. Making a collection of money among the wealthiest members of the caravan, he added to it a packet of leaf tobacco weighing about thirty pounds, and dispatched the whole as an offering to the hostile tribe, who, apparently, were satisfied with the gift, for they immediately recalled their women and disappeared somewhere toward the south.

We had another incident, this morning.

A djemêl of Mareb, forgetful of the vows made by all of us to dwell together in amity with one another, had a dispute with a djemêl of Doân, in the course of which he struck the latter so violently with a stick as to bring blood.

This quarrel, fortunately, did not lead to a faction-fight, as too often happens. Everybody did his best, on the contrary, to part the belligerents, who were taken before the réis, by whom the man who struck the blow, right or wrong, was condemned to receive fifteen blows of a courbash on the soles of his feet, and to pay a fine of two abû-mathfas—one to go to the injured man, the other to the réis.

Our twelfth stage carried us within eighteen leagues of Olû-Yaseb.

The neighborhood in which we now encamped abounding in ostriches, some of our party, myself among the number, set out after breakfast to hunt them.

There are three recognized methods of hunting these birds. By running them down with horse or dromedary; by ambush near where they hatch their egg, and by lying in wait for them at the springs to which they come to drink.

The first, which is the most sportsmanlike manner of

hunting them, is practiced at all seasons. Like our stag-hunting, it is a sport for a gentleman—a royal diversion, as they used to say of old—and not merely the craft of the peasant and the poacher.

To this kind of hunting, however, patience is a necessary condition, for the speed of the ostrich is much greater than that of either horse or dromedary.

The plan adopted by the Arabs is to follow a flock of these birds, without pressing on them—yet disturbing them so much as to prevent them from settling down to feed. Instead of running on a straight line, the ostriches usually describe wild circles in their course, within which the pursuers follow in a concentric ring. After a day, or more, perhaps, of this persevering chase, the birds begin to show signs of fatigue and hunger; upon which the hunters, each singling out his particular ostrich, dash in among them at full gallop, and knock them on the head with clubs—for the head of this bird, being unprotected by feathers, is more vulnerable than the other parts.

As soon as the ostrich falls, the hunter dismounts and bleeds it, keeping the neck well away from the body, so as to avoid staining the feathers.

The ambush method is practiced when the ostrich has laid her eggs, which is generally toward the middle of November. For this kind of hunting a gun is the weapon used, the hunters proceeding in the manner described as follows by General Daumas :

“Arrived upon the tracks of the ostrich, the hunters observe them with care. If they are to be seen only in places where the grass has been eaten, it is a sign that the ostriches have been there to feed; but if the tracks cross each other in every direction, and if the grass is much trampled, the hunter knows that the nests are not far off.

“The ostrich’s nest is of a circular form, dug out in the sand by the bird with its feet.

“The sand thrown up by the ostrich, while thus occupied,

is seen from a distance by the hunters, who approach the spot with great caution.

"When the bird is about to lay, her plaintive cries are heard all day long by the hunters. After having laid, she utters her cry only in the afternoon.

"The note of the male is louder than that of the female. When irritated, they both hiss like geese.

"The female hatches from morning until noon, during which time the male is away feeding. At noon he returns, when the female takes her turn at the feeding grounds. On her return, she sits down at a distance of four or five paces from the nest, opposite the male bird, who is now taking his turn upon the eggs, and who defends her against attack. Among other enemies, the jackal prowls constantly around these retreats, ready to avail himself of circumstances. Dead jackals are frequently found by the hunters in the neighborhood of these nests. They are killed, probably, by the male ostrich; the female is timid and harmless.

"The morning, while the female is sitting, is the time selected by the hunters for making their preparations, which consist in digging holes in the sand, each large enough to contain a man, at some twenty paces from the nest.

"In these holes the marksmen ensconce themselves, covered over with bunches of the long, yellow grass, so common in the desert.

"Mean time the female, frightened at the presence of the hunters, has run off to seek for the male, by whom she is only beaten and compelled to return to her nest. Had the preparations been made while the male bird was sitting on the eggs, he would have gone to the feeding grounds after the female, and neither of them would have returned.

"The female ostrich thus driven back to her nest, the hunters are careful not to disturb her. The rule is to shoot the male first, and they await his return from feeding. About noon he arrives, and the marksman makes ready.

"Ostriches, when hatching, spread themselves out so as

to cover all the eggs, in which position, bending upon their haunches, the thighs are left exposed. These offer a favorable mark to the hunter, who directs his bullet so as to break the legs of the bird, which, thus wounded, is rendered incapable of escape.

"Now the hunter issues from his ambuscade, and proceeds to bleed the ostrich, assisted by his companions. The marks of blood are then covered up with sand, and the dead bird is concealed with care.

"About sunset the female returns, as usual; the absence of the male does not trouble her; she sets herself upon the eggs, and is shot by the marksman from his ambush."

In the third method of hunting these birds, the marksman hides himself in a hole dug near water, and watches there until his game comes to drink.

The Arabs of olden time practiced a fourth method. The hunter covered himself with the skin of an ostrich, passing one arm into the neck, so as to imitate the movements of these birds, by which stratagem he readily approached within shot. This method has been abandoned, however, because the hunter used often to become the victim of his own device.

Dogs, also, and nets have sometimes been employed for the capture of the ostrich.

Ostriches show a preference for the most solitary and sterile regions, through which they roam, sometimes in large troops, sometimes in flocks of a few birds only. Caravans are sometimes startled by these troops, which look, at a distance, like squadrons of cavalry.

These birds live principally upon vegetable food, though, when pressed by hunger, they will eat almost anything that comes before them. They have been known to swallow iron, bones, serpents, scorpions, lizards, bits of copper, and pieces of money. They are remarkably adroit in their movements, and will pick a date from the lips without hurting the person holding it. They never approach

inhabited places except to drink, which done, they flee away with all speed.

Among the ancient Arabs the ostrich was supposed to be the offspring of a bird and a camel. Hence the name of *bird-camel*, by which they knew it. To its generic designation of *struthio*, naturalists also have added the epithet *camelus*.

The hatch of a single ostrich amounts generally to from thirty to forty eggs. Sometimes several couples unite to hatch in partnership, in which case a large hollow is dug out, the center of which is occupied by the oldest pair of birds, the others ranging themselves around at regular distances.

When the eggs have all been laid, they are pushed over toward the middle nest, but not mixed; and while the eldest bird is occupied in hatching, the others sit around in the places where the eggs belonging to them were laid respectively.

These associations are composed of birds of the same family—the old ones in the center of the circle being the parents of the others; but the social system is only resorted to in places where herbage is very abundant.

As many as a hundred and fifty eggs have been found in one of these combined nests. The Arabs say that those of each couple are disposed in a heap, each heap surmounted by the first egg laid, which is destined for the nourishment of the young ones when they break shell.

Young birds, to the age of two years, lay no more than twelve or fourteen eggs to a nest; and their eggs, up to this time, are of small size. Those of the old birds are very large, weighing as much as five or six pounds each.

The eggs of the ostrich are of a dirty white color, with a yellowish tinge. They are excellent eating; the best mode of cooking being to broil them, and serve them up with butter. One of these eggs furnishes a sufficient repast for a hungry man. The shells are strong enough to serve for

vessels, but they are more commonly used as ornaments for the ceilings of mosques.

The time of incubation of the ostrich is six weeks. On emerging from the egg, the young bird is covered with feathers, even on those parts of the body that are afterward to be destitute of them. They are of a reddish gray color, with black spots, and longitudinal bands of the same upon the head and back of the neck. Immediately on being released from the egg, they run about and search for food.

Ostriches pair in August. The young ones, until quite able to take care of themselves, are protected by the male bird, who will face any kind of danger in their defense—whether dog, hyena, eagle, or man himself. The female, on the contrary, affords no protection to her offspring, deserting them on the least cause of alarm. Hence the Bedouins, when speaking of a man who stands up well in defense of his family, compare him to the male ostrich—a timid man to the female.

These birds, although inhabitants of the desert, are by no means so wild as one might suppose. When taken young, they are easily tamed, become play-fellows of the children, and sleep under the tent, following the douar when a move takes place. Tame ostriches have never been known to recur to the wild habits of their kind. They have been trained to carry people on their backs. The tyrant Firmius, who reigned over Egypt toward the end of the third century, is said to have used ostriches as animals of draught.

The marksmen of Arabia owe much of their skill to the chase of this bird, for they are obliged to aim at the head only, so as not to dabble the feathers with blood.

The male bird is black. Hence the Arabs call it *délim*, which means deep black. The female is called *rumâd*, from her color, which is ashy gray.

The large white plumes, so valuable as an article of com-

merce, grow at the ends of the wings and at the tail. Those of the délim—which are superior to those of the female—purchased in the desert for fifteen francs, sell for as much as eighty in Hedjaz and Yémen.

The Arabs obtain from the ostrich a grease said to be valuable as a remedy for wounds. They cover their shields with leather made from its skin, with which they also tip the toes and heels of their sandals, to make them stand wear. With its tendons they make thongs, with which they sew their saddles, and repair various articles of leather.

At three o'clock we returned to the camp with nine ostriches, which were immediately skinned with care, and the skins, after being well powdered with salt on the inner surface, spread out on the sand to dry. The grease was then melted down, the flesh roasted, and both were divided among the members of the caravan, who stored up the former in tin boxes and dined on the latter.

Our next stage, six leagues further, brought us to the borders of those famous Seas of Sand, the *Bahr-es-Saff* of the Arabs, along which the next fifteen leagues of our route was to lead us, and which I started, after breakfast, to visit, in company with Abd'el-Mélick, who volunteered to be my guide.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SEAS OF SAND.—THE LAST OF THE ADS.—THE FENNEC.—WE TRAVEL BY DAY.

MOUNTING our dromedaries, we headed them for the sand-gulf nearest the camp, which it took us fully an hour to reach, although we had supposed ourselves almost upon the verge of it.

The soil of this locality, in general, is of pure clay, with calcareous indications here and there. The ground is covered with a layer of white, truncated stones, about as large as a man's fist, nearly all of one size, and formed with regular facets. These stones resemble lumps of dry mortar, and are evidently of volcanic production. They are spread so equally over the soil, that not an inch of it is left uncovered, which makes it very distressing to travel over.

The eye wanders vainly here in search of the rich culture and many marvels of the traditional Irem, the renowned stronghold of the first of the Ads, already alluded to. At the present day the only vegetation here to be seen consists of a few thorny bushes—one variety of which, with branches drooping like those of the willow, and armed with long spikes, I have met with in Palestine, also, where tradition points to it as the tree from which was made the crown of thorns placed by the Jews upon the lacerated brows of our Saviour.

At length the vast area of these mysterious gulfs displayed itself to our eyes, contrasting by its uniform, smooth flatness with the undulating, stony surface of the surrounding desert. Moving and shifting continually they well sustain their character of sea, for no atom above the weight of twenty grains can remain on their treacherous surface for more than half a minute, without being absorbed and sucked down into the unfathomable depths below.

Near the spot where we dismounted some large stones were piled up—the remains, as my guide assured me, of the ancient Irem.

The seas of sand, respecting the form and extent of which ancient geographers differ, stretch, approximatively speaking, from the territory of Béni-Nosab, on the sixteenth degree of north latitude, to half way between the eighteenth and nineteenth, with a breadth, perhaps, of from thirty to thirty-five leagues. They consist of a series of unconnected gulfs, the circuit of which has not hitherto been made, I believe, by any Arab.

Tradition tells us that Ad, the founder and chief of the Adites, took up his residence in the Desert of Akhâf, about the center of the peninsula, where he founded Irem, which had already become a great and powerful city when he died.

"The country," according to this tradition, "was a right pleasant one previous to the destruction of Irem and its environs—watered like a pleasant garden, and verdant as Yémen. But this state of things was not destined to last.

"Notwithstanding the destruction of Scheddad-ben-Ad, the Adites continued to abandon themselves to the practice of an idolatry the most besotted.

"At length Allah sent among them the prophet Houd, who endeavored to lead them into the right path: but, instead of listening to him, they scourged him with switches.

"Then came a great drought and a famine, in token of the wrath of heaven.

"For these evils the Adites saw no other remedy than to send some of their people on a pilgrimage to the Temple of the Kâaba.

"With this mission seventy of them were charged, departing under the conduct of Morthed and Kil, two of the head chiefs of the tribe.

"Arrived at the territory of Moawiâh, of the tribe of Béni-Kelb, Prince of Hedjaz, they were kindly received by him, and obtained his permission to make the sacrifices necessary for obtaining a favorable reply.

"Morthed, however, touched by remorse, repeatedly told his companions that their prayers were in vain so long as they continued to despise the messenger of Allah.

"Kil, stung by these reproaches, poisoned the mind of Moawiâh against his colleague; and, having caused him to be thrown into prison by that prince, took sole charge of the Adite pilgrims, and led them to the holy place.

"There they completed their sacrifices, and besought Allah to send down rain from heaven.

"At that instant three clouds gathered above their heads; one white, another red, and the third black.

"'Which of these three choose ye?' cried a voice from the air.

"Kil chose the black one, because he thought it contained more rain than the others.

"But it poured forth a deluge of fire and brimstone, destroying Irem that very night, with its inhabitants, and every green thing in the country round.

"A sage named Lockman was spared, however, with a few of his disciples. He became the chief of a new tribe, called the tribe of the last of the Ads, and lived to the age of seven falcons, or about five hundred and sixty years."

As Saturn was the type of antiquity among the ancient Romans, so is Ad among the Arabs of the present day, who, in speaking of any event that happened long since, say it took place in the time of Ad.

If we are to believe this tradition, there can be but little doubt that Irem, like Sodom and Gomorrah, was destroyed by volcanic action—for it goes on to say:

"Lockman, looking out upon Irem and the country around it, saw clouds of burning ashes arise from the earth, like the flames of a furnace."

I have been present at several volcanic eruptions, and could not describe them better than in the above words.

Pliny attributes to volcanic agency the desolation of this country, and the subsequent formation of the sand-gulfs.

I tasted a pinch of sand from the gulf on the edge of which we stood, and found it of a most disagreeable flavor—unlike the sand of the desert in general, which is rather pleasant to the taste. This difference, I suppose, must be attributed to the action of internal fire and the existence of bitumen, which is found here at the present day and used by the Arabs.

Everything in this awful tract tends to prove that it has

been the scene of some terrible convulsion of nature, the traces of which are still manifest to the least observant.

Upon arriving at my tent, after our visit to the gulfs, Selim brought in a *fennec*, captured by him while he was cutting wood.

This curious little animal—of which I brought to Europe the first living specimen ever seen there, and which was kept alive for some time in the *Jardin des Plantes** at Paris, where it was a great attraction to visitors—has long been a puzzle to naturalists. The singular combination of character displayed by it, and the exaggerated development of portions of its structure—the ears for instance—have also given rise to many erroneous conjectures respecting it on the part of those by whom conjectures are made to supply the place of facts.

When Bruce was British consul at Algiers, in 1767, he there saw, for the first time, a *fennec*, of which he sent a drawing and description to Buffon, who published them in the third volume of his “Supplements,” in which he introduced the species as *anonymous*.

In the following year, Brandt, Swedish consul at Algiers in the time of Bruce, who had also observed the *fennec*, published, in his *Voyage au Cap*, a very minute description of it, but without a drawing. This writer called the animal a *zerda*, by which name it is known among the Moors. Sparrmann also speaks of it as the *zerda*. Bruce, having examined further specimens, published a new description of the animal, which he therein denominated the *fennec*.

The latter authority tells us that this quadruped is peculiar to the desert, and that it is called *fennec* by the Arabs—which is the fact.

These were the only sources from which, previous to the arrival of my specimen in Europe, any idea had been formed

* There is now a pair of these animals in this collection, to which they were lately added by General Yusuf.

of the nature and appearance of this little animal. The first observations of Bruce and Brandt were necessarily incomplete, being of one and the same specimen, which effected its escape before an exact description of it had been obtained. Nevertheless, several naturalists undertook to determine the relations between the fennec and the other mammiferæ.

Blumenbach, led probably by the description furnished by Sparmann, classed it among the *mangoustes*. M. Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire considered it as belonging to the genus *galago*; while M. Desmarest, who had at first assigned to it, under the name of *mégalothe*, a position between the makis, the felines, and the canines, subsequently referred it to the latter, among which it appears now to have taken its place.

The length of the fennec is nine inches from the back of the head to the insertion of the tail, which is seven inches long. The head is three inches in length, and the ears are about as long. Its color is a pale, tawny yellow mixed with gray, and paler still on the under parts of the body. The tail is tipped with black, the fur thick and soft. It digs burrows in the sand of the desert, in which it remains concealed during the greater part of the day, the thick, intricate web of hair with which its ears are lined preserving them from injury by the penetration of sand, while their great length enables the animal to detect the faintest sounds.

Having closely examined this fennec, I set him at liberty, for he would have been a troublesome companion to have taken with me over the desert.

On leaving this halting-place, we changed our time, starting at day-break instead of at sunset, as hitherto, so as to travel by daylight—an arrangement made in consequence of our vicinity to the seas of sand, in which the wayfarer by night is liable to be engulfed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BY THE SEAS OF SAND.—THE SIMOOM.—THE RAINBOW.—WRECKED.—
LOSS OF NINE CAMELS.—IRREPARABLE DISASTER.—THE HUMORS
OF NASSR-EDDYN-EFFENDI.—ALLAH IS GREAT! IT IS THE WILL
OF ALLAH!

DURING our fourteenth stage we met with no adventure worthy of note.

The route led us over a desert uniform and dreary, and flat of surface as the gulfs that lay on our right hand and on our left. Deep fissures occurred frequently in our path, and our animals fell prostrate, now and then, as the tremulous earth gave way beneath their tread. A ghastly silence brooded upon all around; and, with the exception of one or two gazelles started by us, no living thing, bird, or beast, lent animation to these dread solitudes.

As we neared our fifteenth halt, however, symptoms of life and movement were dimly apparent—life and movement the most squalid and slothful. For the up-curling smoke warned us of some wretched Khafr-el-Arianin hovels, so crushed down and abject as to be scarcely distinguishable from the desert on which they groveled—while two herdsmen, yellow as the sands beneath their feet, and some long-eared goats, completed the dusky picture.

Soon after we had passed these, the heavens became suddenly obscured by heavy clouds, while the sun, rayless and red as blood, warned us of the approaching tempest. Whirlwinds of sand, minging with the falling vapors, swept the desert, which surged before the blast like angry waters. We hastily ranged ourselves in single file, so as to present as little surface as possible to the coming simoom, for which, on this occasion, we were not unprepared.

Gradually our lungs became oppressed, our eyes blood-shot, our lips hot and parched. The air around us, scorch-

ing as the breath of a furnace, was charged with particles of fine sand, drifted before the wind like sea-foam in a storm. The lightning-bolts flashed, accompanied by the crash of the thunder, which sounded over the gloomy desert like the voice of Jehovah. Men stared in wild affright, camels broke away and rushed bellowing from the track, until they fell headlong in the sand, into which they plunged their heads and long necks, seeking thus to escape the poisoned blast of the plague-wind.

At length the rainbow appeared on the skirts of the tempest, spanning the dark space from east to west, like a luminous bridge thrown across Mareb and Hadramaut, one end resting upon Djebel-Akhdar, and the other upon Djebel-Arêd.

The storm had passed away, and we encamped upon the spot where we were overtaken by it.

Nine of our camels were missing; in searching for which we approached the edge of one of the sand gulfs, where we stumbled upon the remains of a caravan bound from Greïn, in Hadramaut, to Olû-Yaseb. Removing the sand by which these were covered, we found several dead Arabs, victims of the fell blast of the simoom, in the terror and confusion caused by which they had evidently wandered blindly to the edge of the treacherous quicksand in which the main body of the caravan had perished.

Among them we found a young man and a girl—brother and sister—clasped in each other's arms. A slight indication of moisture on the bodies of these inspired me with hope that it might yet not be too late to restore them to consciousness. By judicious and persevering friction, and the copious use of lavender water, with which, luckily, I was always well supplied, I soon had the pleasure of seeing the young girl revive—while Selim, by the steady application of similar remedies to the youth, was equally successful.

Our companions of the caravan were struck with amaze-

ment at this result—this new exhibition of my skill, magnified by their ignorance, imbuing them with the most profound respect for the *Hakim-Turcki*, as they called me. They still persisted, however, in attributing my successful practice to supernatural agency, and in believing me to be a communicant with spirits of the other world.

Having quite succeeded in restoring the young castaways of the desert, we returned to the encampment—without our nine camels, however, which, like the unfortunate caravan of which we had found the remains, were swallowed up by the gulping quick-sands.

And now another disaster was announced to us—an irreparable loss. The fiery tongue of the simoom had lapped up nearly all the water from our bottles.

Hardly had we escaped from the hot breath of that pestilent visitor, when the dread fiend, thirst, threatened to consume us; for the water in all the wells along this part of our route was totally unfit for use, being infected by the putrid taint of myriads of dead locusts, with the stench of which it was completely impregnated.

The utmost economy, then, of this indispensable article became necessary, and a beginning was made by putting us on half rations.

Breakfast was our next object—with a view to which I despatched Selim to a little douar of *Khafir-el-Arianin* which was visible from our camp. He soon returned with a kid, which was bled, skinned and turning on the spit, before a great fire of bramble-wood, in a very short space of time.

Until now, I had never fully entered into the spirit of the complaint made by the brother of the Prodigal Son, when he reproached his father in these words :

“And yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.”

This kid of the desert, which Mohammed roasted whole, was of exquisite flavor, furnishing a choice repast—to assist

at which I invited the réis, Abd'el-Mélick, and the old man Nassib.

After dinner, as we sipped our coffee and smoked our pipes, Abd'el-Mélick contributed to our amusement by recounting some of the humors of the renowned iman Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, whose pleasantries, of which I here give a few samples, are quoted all through the East:

I.

One morning, Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi ascended into his pulpit, to preach, and addressing his hearers, said:

“O believers! know ye what I am going to talk to you about?”

They replied that they did not.

“Well, then,” rejoined he, “since you do not know, do you suppose that I am going to tell you?”

Another morning he again appeared in the pulpit, and said:

“O believers! know ye not what I am going to tell you?”

They replied that they did.

“If you know it, then,” said he, “I need not tell it to you;” and he descended from the pulpit, and went his way.

His auditors, puzzled what to do, at length agreed that, if he again made his appearance, some of them would say that they knew, others that they did not.

And again Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi mounted into the pulpit and said:

“O Mussulmans! know ye what I am going to say to you?”

To which some replied “we know”—others “we know not.”

“Good!” returned he—“let those who know tell those who do not.”

II.

A fellâh came in from the country, one morning, bringing a gazelle to Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, who received it very graciously, and invited the donor to dine with him.

A week afterwards, the same man again came to see him; but Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, having forgotten him, asked him who he was.

"I am he who brought you the gazelle," replied the man: upon which Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi welcomed him as before.

Some days after this, certain strangers having come to claim his hospitality, he asked them who they were.

"We are the neighbors of him who brought you the gazelle," answered they; and he received them as his guests.

Shortly after, yet others presented themselves, who, on being asked by him who they were, replied:

"We are the neighbors of the neighbors of the man who brought you the gazelle."

And Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, bidding them welcome, placed before them a cup of cold water only, saying—"Drink; it is the broth of the broth of the gazelle."

III.

One evening, Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi borrowed a pot from one of his neighbors, and, having finished cooking with it, he put a stew-pan inside it and returned it to the owner.

The latter, seeing the stew-pan, asked Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi what it was:

"The pot has had a young one," replied the latter, and went his way.

Another time, he again borrowed the pot, took it home with him, and did not return it.

Five days after, the owner of the pot, surprised at its

not having been returned, went to Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi and asked him for it.

"Allah be merciful to you!" exclaimed the latter, "your pot is dead."

"What!" cried the other, "do pots die?"

"Come, now," retorted Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, "you were ready enough to believe that pots can bring forth young ones; why, then, should they not die?"

IV.

One day a beggar knocked at the door of Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi.

"What do you want there?" asked the latter.

"Come down," said the beggar-man.

Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi came down, and again asked him what he wanted.

"I seek for alms," replied the beggar-man.

"Good!" exclaimed Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi. "Go up stairs."

The beggar-man went up, and then Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi said to him:

"The blessing of Allah be upon you!"

"But why did you not say this while I was below, O Sidi?" asked the beggar-man.

"Why, yourself?" retorted Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi; "when I was up-stairs, why did you ask me to come down?"

V.

Another time, Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi having lost an ass, made inquiries about it of some person, who replied:

"I have seen thy donkey; they have made a cadi of him."

"Ah!" exclaimed Nassr-Eddyn-Effendi, "I knew he

would become a *cadi* some time or another, for he always cocked his ears to listen while I was teaching my pupils."

And with this kind of light talk my Arab guests whiled away the time, for it is a characteristic of this people to think no more of danger after it has passed away. They care for nothing in life but prayer, repose, and their simple pleasures. All the rest is to them but as the smoke from the *chiboque*, which curls upward, to be wafted away by the first breath of wind.

When they are happy they say, "Allah is great!"

When in trouble "It is the will of Allah!"

All their emotions, sentiments, their very existence, are comprised in these two ideas.

Beneath the less brilliant skies of our European countries, where the sun often breaks out more like a blotch than a luminary, our chilled senses leave us no relish for the simple enjoyments of life. For us, life must be *spiced*. Stimulants have their effects upon us for a while, but nature revolts at these. We dwell amid artificial excitements, the victims of inevitable reaction, beneath which we again fall down into the abyss of our normal *ennui*, flat as collapsed balloons.

From all this the Arabs are exempt—their vitality and animal spirits needing not the spurs of artificial excitement to urge them on to enjoyment. Their happiness is even in its tenor, seeming to be taken in by them with the very air they breathe. With them the present is like the past, nor do they doubt that the future will be the same. They consider hurry and excitement as beneath the dignity of a man, for they are sedentary by nature, slow and solemn upon principle, and slaves by conviction. They do as their ancestors did before them, retaining their traditional manners and customs, from which they consider it would be presumptuous in them to depart.

Half way on our sixteenth stage, we diverged from the

Seas of Sand, and the next halt brought us to our forty-second league from Olû-Yaseb, and within thirty of Doân.

When our camp was established, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni took into his own tent a young merchant of Doân, whose name was Omar, and who had been for some time prostrated by an attack of fever and dysentery, brought on by his having imprudently eaten some dates at our previous halt.

This imprudence cost him his life.

I did all I could for him, but without avail. Conscious of his approaching end, Omar summoned his friends and acquaintances around him, and said :

“My friends, salute my parents for me ; I shall see them no more in this world. Nevertheless they know, as I do, that our time on earth is but as a journey. Tell them that I died in the fear of Allah.”

At six o'clock he recited the profession of faith, “There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet!” with which words he breathed his last.

The body was washed and wrapped in a white shroud, perfumed with myrrh and incense. The iman and the muezzin passed the night in reading over it the prayers for the dead, and at morning it was borne forth in funeral procession, and buried in a grave dug under a bush near the camp.

The camels, merchandise, and other effects of the deceased were sold, according to regulation.

To-day we returned to our former hours of travel, resuming our journey just after set of sun.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THIRST.—ARRIVAL AT DOÂN.

THE route now led over ground similar to that traversed by us before our approach to the sand-gulfs. No tree was to be seen; not a shrub or plant, nor any sign of vegetation whatever, except the long-bladed, parched grass on which the ostrich feeds. A breeze, burning like lambent flame, swept continually across this tawny, concave desert, on the immense expanse of which our camels dwindled down to the insignificance of migrating ants.

We were incessantly harassed also by the imperceptible drifting sand raised by the tramp of so many feet, which, filtering through our garments, covered, as with an extra cuticle, the parched skin. By this process our black negro slaves were transformed into yellow Malays.

In addition to these discomforts, a burning thirst now began to prey upon us, while we dreaded to draw upon the small stock of water left us by the insatiable simoom. This was divided at the next halt, but was so insufficient for the wants of the company that some camels had to be sacrificed for the sake of their internal supply of the precious fluid—a reserve purchased once by a merchant of Asia, under similar circumstances, at the price of his entire fortune.

Had we killed all our camels, however, the aggregate supply of water obtained from them would still have been insufficient for the wants of so many people.

The poor animals themselves suffered as much as we did, their reserve having been nearly exhausted in the long eight days' journey toiled through by them since we left Olû-Yaseb. From the commencement of our eighteenth stage they began to show symptoms of distress, falling continually beneath their loads. And then came the harassing work of

lifting and rearranging these, which nearly exhausted the little vigor still left among us.

But the condition of the women was worse than all, and yet they bore up with a courage that seemed to set suffering at defiance. Here, as elsewhere, I remarked that those of most robust appearance were the first to sink.

At length we arrived at our last halt but one—a halt of suffering and misery, to be followed by a stage of still greater horror.

About one o'clock in the morning one of our people, exhausted by fatigue and thirst, fell by the wayside.

We did all in our power to revive him, trying even to procure a few drops of water for his parched mouth by squeezing one of the skin bottles. But all in vain. He died.

Soon after I felt my energies beginning to fail, my increasing weakness warning me that I, too, must soon succumb. By this time several of my companions had fallen helpless to the ground, where they were abandoned to their fate—for the feeling of *sauf-qui-peut* had already taken possession of the caravan.

All now became disorder; men, camels, and baggage falling by the way, while Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, whose coolness never deserted him, notwithstanding the sinking condition of his dromedary, did his best to reassure all, and to encourage them to press forward to the last.

At length, a little before six o'clock in the morning, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni himself fell to the ground.

My turn now came, and I, too, fell prostrate.

Seized thus in the wide desert, the few men left with us unable to give us any assistance, since they had not strength left to bring water to us, even supposing there was any to be found, we should inevitably have perished had not Providence rescued us by what seemed almost a miracle. For, soon after we had thus fallen fainting by the wayside, there loomed in the distance a large caravan, heading towards us.

It proved to be one bound for Mecca, under the conduct

of a réis of Térin, named Sidi-Mohammed, who, touched by the sad condition in which he found us, caused the contents of several skin water-bottles to be poured over all those who were lying prostrate in the sand—a treatment under which we gradually recovered our senses, though it was some time before we could recognize any of the people around us.

At length the power of vision was restored, and we saw a number of strange camel-drivers occupied in rendering aid to all of our fallen, while they addressed us with words of encouragement and comfort. We tried to thank them, but speech was prevented by the knot formed in the throat, which disappeared when we had succeeded in swallowing a few mouthfuls of water, and then our words found way, and we asked our preservers who they were.

“Fear nothing,” replied Sidi-Mohammed, giving his name, “we are friends—not Khafir-Arianin.”

Reassured by these words, we soon recovered under the care of these brave fellows, who left nothing undone to put us in a condition for continuing our route. They gave us as much water as they could spare, and then proceeded on their way, for time was precious with them, and they could but ill afford that already expended in assisting us.

The attack of thirst is accompanied by frightful symptoms. The skin becomes perfectly arid, the eye bloodshot; the tongue and mouth are covered with a thick, yellow tartar, resembling melted wax; a faltering languor arrests the movements; respiration is impeded by a knot in the diaphragm and throat; tears roll in large single drops from the eyes, and the victim at length falls senseless to the ground.

We found some difficulty in remounting our dromedaries and getting once more upon the route. At eleven o'clock in the morning we halted, after a forced march of fifteen hours in one stretch; and about noon all our people arrived

safely with the baggage, for Sidi-Mohammed had come up with them, too, succored them, and saved all.

Near where we halted there was a camp of Khafir-el-Arianin. A few mats, stretched upon poles driven into the sand, served as shelter to their women, who came to us with provisions, offering goats' milk and fresh meat, but only for a full equivalent in money.

Confidence was restored to us by the sight of food; and after a repast rendered doubly acceptable by our late privations, we abandoned ourselves to much-needed repose, after which our people seemed to be restored to their original energies.

We now threw ourselves upon the route with renewed vigor; and by the time day broke, and the flush of dawn spread itself over all, we seemed to have forgotten all our sufferings, all our fatigues. The aspect of the country soon began to change—the sand-hills gradually diminishing in size, and the sand lowering perceptibly in temperature.

And now, as we neared the summit of a ridge, those who were in front uttered a shout of joy, for they saw in the distance something like a river, the pools of which, as they appeared here and there, flashed like mirrors of fire in the rays of the morning sun. Nor had we gone much further when we trod the soil of Hadramaut; and about nine o'clock in the morning of Monday, the fourth of September, 1844, we came in view of an oasis, behind the thick foliage of which we discerned the housetops and minarets of Doân.

The Hebrews could not have manifested greater joy at the first view of the Land of Promise than our people did at this prospect. Waving our hands and shouting, we all drove our dromedaries, at their top speed, toward the town so ardently longed for, where, as at Mareb, we were received with acclamations and much expenditure of powder, amid an indescribable confusion and salutation of friends meeting friends.

When we arrived at the market-place order was restored, and the iman recited the Fatha over us.

We then separated—the Doânite members of the caravan going to their respective homes, while I, with my servants and dromedaries, followed the réis, who insisted on my being his guest so long as I remained at Doân.

CHAPTER XXXV.

NEWS FROM ABÛ-ARISCH AND SANA.—DEATH OF HASSAN, THE MÂHDY.—MY REPLY TO THE LETTER OF HUSSEÏN OF ABÛ-ARISCH.

SHORTLY after I had established myself in the house of Abû-Bekr-el-Doâni, my host informed me that a stranger wished to speak with me. This person declined to give his name, but stated that he came from Abû-Arisch, on hearing which I desired that he should be admitted.

He proved to be a man well known to me, one of the confidential *rakkas* of the Chériff Hussein, by name Abd'Allah. On my asking what news he had for me, he glanced at me with a look of intelligence, as if doubtful whether he ought to impart it before the réis; but on my making a sign to him to proceed, he took off one of his sandals, and having separated the two bands of leather of which the sole was composed, drew from between them a letter which he handed to me.

The contents of it were as follows :

*“ Hussein-ben-Ali, Sovereign of Abû-Arisch and Théama,
to the Hadji-Abd'el-Hamid-Bey.*

“ May Allah shower upon you His grace and His blessing !

“ DEAR FRIEND : It is long since I have had a letter from you ; nor has any person brought news to me of your pre-

cious health. I have not even had an opportunity of conversing with people coming from the part of the country in which you have been sojourning, from whence it arises that I am sorely troubled about you.

"As for myself, I have the pleasure of announcing to you—glory be to Allah!—that I am in good health, and that I remain constant to the sentiments of friendship and affection which, for two years, have bound us so closely to each other—sentiments which, for my part, I shall ever cherish.

"The Imaum of Sana is dead. By my aid his nephew, Ahmed, whom you knew at Abû-Arisch, has succeeded to his rule.

"In return for this, the traitor has risen up in arms and attempts to depose me.

"And it is now that I have need of you, Hadji, for, with you to counsel me, I should fear nothing.

"On receiving this letter, then, write a few lines to me, telling me how you are and signifying your intention of returning hither, in order that my spirit may recover its tranquility.

"I wait for news from you with the utmost impatience, hoping that you will follow them as soon as possible.

"Till then may Allah bless you with peace and pleasure!

"14th Châban of the year 1261.

"HUSSEÏN-BEN-ALI,

"Sovereign of Abû-Arisch and of Théama.

Having read this letter, I told Abu-Bekr-el Doâni of the death of his friend, the Imaum of Sana, who was assassinated, as the messenger now told us, by the *sbîrri* of his nephew, who now reigned in his stead.

"A foul crime!" exclaimed the réis. "Time was when he who had slain a descendant of the Prophet would have been renounced by his very friends. The curse of every good Mussulman would have fallen upon him; his family would have been disgraced, his house burned, his property

confiscated; and Allah would have armed the hand of some true believer to have struck him dead. But these Sanites are atrocious miscreants, devoid of respect for all things which other men look upon as sacred."

"But this is not the only crime of which Ahmed has been guilty," said Abd'Allah: "not satisfied with usurping the throne of his uncle, he took up arms against his benefactor, my master, and endeavored to wrest the province of Théama from him."

"These acts of Ahmed," rejoined I, "are just what I should have expected from him. Long since I formed my own opinion of that young man, and warned Husseïn that he was giving shelter to a fox that would some day devour his hens. But what has become of Hassan the Mâhdy?"*

"Dead; assassinated, like the Imaum, by the sbirri of Ahmed. It happened thus:

"Soon after his accession to the throne, Ahmed invited all his partisans to a great feast, Hassan among others. But this feast, as you shall hear, was a snare.

"Ahmed feared Hassan, and resolved to get rid of him as he had of his uncle.

"With this object, when the feast was drawing to a close, he made a sign to Mesrour, his favorite eunuch, to approach him, and instructed him secretly to follow Hassan as he went forth from the palace, and stab him to the heart with his djembie.

"Nevertheless, softly as Ahmed had spoken this order, his words were overheard by Hassan and by him who sat next him.

"The latter, whose name was Osman, perceiving that Hassan was troubled, took the opportunity, as he handed a glass of rose-water to him, to whisper a word of advice,

* Mâhdy means *Messiah*. This Hassan gave himself out to be the personage who, according to the legend, is to appear some day for the purpose of converting all people to the Mussulman faith.

telling him to feign unconcern, lest they might think he had overheard the order.

"Following this advice, Hassan put as good a face on the matter as possible. When the repast was over he asked Osman what had best be done.

"'Leave the palace at the same time we do,' said the latter, 'for no attempt will be made upon your life unless you go alone. I will go forth in my abbaye only, and you can wrap yourself up in my crimson pelisse, which hangs yonder on the wall.'

"The feast was now over. Ahmed had taken leave of his guests, and Hassan prepared to retire with the others, no obstruction being offered to his departure.

"But, just as he was going through the last gate, he felt a touch upon his shoulders, and, on looking round, recognized a negro boy belonging to the palace, who said :

"'My master has sent me to tell you that he desires to have some private conversation with you.'

"The blood of Hassan ran cold. Already he seemed to feel the keen blade of the djembie. Nevertheless, he could not withdraw, for he was led by his destiny.

"'You will find my master,' continued the negro, 'in the hall where the feast was held.'

"Hassan re-entered the apartment, which some slaves were occupied in restoring to order ; but they retired as he entered, leaving him alone and in utter darkness.

"After waiting for some time, a door opened, and, by the feeble light of a lamp burning in the next chamber, he recognized the negro boy who had been sent after him by Ahmed.

"Had he not been under the roof of his enemy, he might then have thought his last moment come ; but, so long as he was there, he had nothing to fear ; for we know that the Mussulman can not stain his house with the blood of the man who has partaken of bread and salt with him. The negro approached him, telling him that he need not now

wait, as Ahmed was at prayers and would be so occupied for an hour.

“‘Now, blessed be Allah!’ replied the Mâhdy—‘convey my best thanks to your good master for his kindness toward one of the least worthy of his servants!’

“On returning through the hall Hassan saw the pelisse of Osman, and, taking it down from the wall, wrapped himself in it before he went out.

“‘Here,’ said he to the boy, as he was leaving the palace, ‘here are five thalers for you, to repay you for your trouble.’

“The slave opened his great white eyes with astonishment, while he hesitated for a moment to accept the proffered backsheesh; but he could not long resist the temptation; and, taking the money, he hid it in the folds of his girdle. Then, as Hassan went forth, he stood before him in the path, and said:

“‘Master, may I ask you a question?’

“‘Speak,’ replied Hassan.

“‘Whither are you going to-night?’

“‘Back to my cave.’

“‘By which road?’

“‘That over the mountain.’

“‘Better take the one through the valley.’

“‘And wherefore, pray?’

“‘There is a dead horse at the foot of the mountain. Carion is unlucky to meet with at night.’

“‘That may be your belief, but I am not so superstitious: I take the mountain road.’

“‘So much the worse!’ said the young negro, in a low voice.

“Hassan heard him, however: but, independent of the warning, he had already decided upon taking the road through the valley. On leaving the palace he met a saïss, who greeted him with,

“‘Good night, Osman!—may Allah be with you!’ -

"From this he knew that his disguise was successful; but, cautious not to betray himself by speaking, he only bowed his head in return.

"He had gone about a quarter of a league when he came to a water-course, along the banks of which the path leading to his cave ran. The spot was a dangerous one, and he crept along, therefore, with the stealthy tread of a fox or a jackal, concealed by a thicket of nabacks from the observation of any person who might have been upon the opposite bank—when, just as he came near a pool in the water-course, he heard the ringing sound produced by the butt of a matchlock brought down upon the rock.

"Looking intently in the direction of the sound, he spied a Bedouin lying down by the pool and lapping up water with the hollow of his hand, while a voice from the other bank of the water-course bantered him, saying,

"‘Hallo, there! what do you mean by blowing and snorting in the water that way, like a camel gone ten days without drinking?’

"‘I have nothing better to do,’ replied the other—‘here we have watched for two hours and a half to no purpose.’

"‘Ay—but we were ordered to watch silently.’

"‘That is no longer necessary. Unless Mesrour has killed him, he must have got clear away by this time.’

"‘So much the better. It is an ugly job to be engaged in. For my part, I wish I was well rid of it.’

"‘And so with me. The blood of an innocent man falls ever upon the head of him who spills it.’

"The Mâhdy knew that it was of him they spoke. He had misunderstood the negro boy, or been deceived by him as to the safest road. And now a slight rustling caused by him in the bushes attracted the attention of the two Bedouins.

"‘Did you not hear something stir in the bushes?’ said one, ‘mayhap it is a prowling fox, come to look after our hen-

roosts. Better to go and guard them than to wait here gaping.'

"'Here goes to let drive into the thicket, then !' cried the other, and, taking aim in the direction from which the sound came, he fired, and shot the Mâhdy through the chest.

"Running up at the cry uttered by him, they found him in the agonies of death, and finished him with the butts of their matchlocks. They then cut off his head, and bore it in triumph to Ahmed, who counted down fifty thalers to each of the assassins for his share in the deed.

"And this, O ! Sidis, was the fate of Hassan the Mâhdy."

"And what became of his treasures ?" inquired I.

"They fell to the share of him who compassed his death," replied Abd'Allah ; " who, on the following morning, went to the cave of his victim, attended by his people. There they found a vast accumulation of money and articles of value, together with many strange instruments used for surgery and for consulting the stars, besides a number of young girls of all ages, who used to furnish him, by means of dreams, with subjects for his revelations, thus enabling him to gain believers in his prophetic mission."

"These are strange stories you have brought us," said I — "but tell us how you managed to accomplish your secret journey hither in safety."

"I barely escaped with my life," answered he—"and that I owe to my guardian angel. All the way from Abû-Arisch hither, I had nothing to eat but a little bread and a few dates, and often have I been obliged to conceal myself in the thickets from the partisans of Ahmed, and to sleep among the hollows of the rocks. Nevertheless, I am ready to return at once, if necessary."

I desired him to call upon Selim for such refreshment as he needed, and to seek repose, so as to be ready to start upon his return before night.

The hour of the siesta had now arrived, and I retired to

my quarters in a pleasant kiosk fitted up for me in the garden of my host—a retreat cradled amid fruits and flowers, and enlivened by the warbling of birds.

Here Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni came to seek me at three o'clock, and, finding me in a thoughtful mood, asked me the reason, on which I showed him the letter of Husseïn.

"There should be nothing in that to disquiet you," said he, when he had read it; "on the contrary, it strikes me as containing something fortunate both for you and me—for you because it will lead you back to your friend Husseïn, and for me because I shall have the pleasure of your company on my return trip."

"Thanks for your flattering opinion of me," returned I, but my returning to Abû-Arisch is out of the question, and I will tell you why."

And I then enlightened him with regard to the complication of intrigues in which I had been enmeshed in the harem of Husseïn, and still more by the Turkish party at Mecca,—intrigues in which my life had nearly been forfeited, attempts to poison me having been made by both parties. For I had incurred the displeasure of the harem from having declined to accept the hand of one of Husseïn's daughters, and of the Turkish party because I had put that prince on his guard against the wily movements of the Porte—matters of which I have treated fully in my "*Arabie Heureuse*."

When I had concluded, the réis, seeing that I was decided upon not returning with him, pressed me to remain at his house at Doân, at least until his return from his next journey to Sana. Nevertheless, I announced my intention of leaving him on the following Saturday.

"But you forget that the Ramadan has commenced," said the réis, in a remonstrating tone.

"As for the Ramadan," replied I, "I shall avail myself of the commutation allowed to travelers, by bestowing alms each day of its duration on the poor, and by setting a slave at liberty, or fasting for two subsequent months instead.

The season glides rapidly away, and I must be at Muscat before the coming of the rains."

This settled the matter so far as my pushing onward; but the réis was puzzled as to how I could excuse myself to Hussein—a matter which I also settled, however, by calling on Selim for my traveling writing-case, which I set upon my knees and wrote as follows :

"El-Hadji-Abd'el-Hamid-Bey to Hussein-ben-Ali, Sovereign of Abû-Arisch and Théama.

"May Allah shower upon you His grace and blessing !

"DEAR PRINCE:—The letter with which you have honored me, dated the 14th Châban, came to hand on the third day of the Ramadan.

"Your words with regard to myself have brought great satisfaction to my spirit : they have been as water to the garden of my soul. I have pressed your valued letter to my eyes, to my lips ; and it has found a resting place by the road to my heart.

"Far as I am away from you in the flesh, I for ever dwell with you in the spirit ; nor am I without hopes that my sentiments are honored by being reciprocated.

"But the *fever* which forced me to leave you is still upon me, O Prince ! nor is there any cure for the thirst for adventure, except that to be found in the distraction of travel.

"And so it is with regret that I am obliged to forego the pleasure of accepting your kind invitation, and of assisting you to repulse the traitor Ahmed, whose ingratitude, long since foretold by me, must surely lead him to his own downfall.

"Let not your soul be disturbed, then, by the base attempts of that ungrateful miscreant, but trust in Allah that neither hurt nor harm shall come to you through them.

“For are you not of the number of those whom Allah has distinguished by peculiar blessings? Your contingents are numerous and have never yet been vanquished; the lances of your warriors are renowned throughout Yémen for their inevitable thrusts; your cause is sacred, for you fight neither for spoils nor for temporal advantage, but solely in a spirit of resistance to unjust aggression.

“May Allah ever preserve you in prosperity, health, and happiness!

“Written at Doân, in Hadramaut, this third day of the Ramadan, 1261.

“EL-HADJI-ABD’EL-HAMID-BEY.

“P. S.—Pray give my respects to your son, to your nephew, Abd’el-Mélick, and to our friend Yachya.”

I showed this letter to Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, who complimented me upon it, and I then delivered it to Abd’Allah, by whom it was to be taken to its destination beyond the desert.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ABLUTIONS.—THE RAMADAN.—ALMS.—DOÂN.

ON the following morning, Tuesday, the fifth of September, 1844—the fourth day of the Ramadan, 1261—I was awakened at day-break by a great clattering of rattles and sound of voices, which seemed to proceed from the upper air. It was the warning of the muezzins, who, from the galleries of the minarets, were calling the inhabitants of Doân to prayer, and notifying them that their daily fast had set in.

At this signal all people rise and make their ablutions,

until which have been performed the exercise of every religious act is forbidden by Mussulman law—the washing of the body reminding each true believer that he is to address himself to heaven with a clear conscience and a heart purified from guile. This symbolical obligation is so rigorous that, in default of water, he is allowed to use earth or sand.

In the *sourate*, or chapter of the Koran relative to ablutions, we find it said :

“ O believers ! before offering up your devotions, wash your faces, and your hands and arms to the elbows, also your heads and your feet. If sick, or traveling, rub your faces and your hands.”

There are two kinds of ablutions generally practiced—the *abḍest* and the *g'houlṣ*. The former of these is the partial ablution constantly performed ; the other the regular bath taken by every Mussulman at least three times a week, and, during the Ramadan, every morning before the first prayer, taken at which time it is supposed to cleanse the spirit as well as the body.

The fast of the Ramadan commences the moment the first quarter of the new moon appears through the light of declining day. To establish the fact of this having taken place, the attestation of two witnesses is deemed sufficient, on which, proclamation of the month of abstinence is made.

“ All ye who believe !” says the Prophet, “ the fast is to be observed by you as it was by your forefathers. The moon of the Ramadan, during which the Koran descended upon earth to guide men in the path of salvation, is the time appointed for this fast.”

To carry out fully the exactions of the Ramadan, it is necessary for each person formally to declare, from day to day, his intention of fasting on the following one, otherwise his fast counts for nothing.

All business is suspended during the hours of the fast.

There is a general cessation of enmities and gathering together of families. The greatest care must be observed to avoid swallowing any substance whatever during this time, even the saliva, as the fast is considered vitiated if the smallest particle of anything has found its way into the stomach. Tobacco smoke even is included in this prohibition.

To avoid temptation of every kind, then, during the time of the Ramadan, the devout members of the community invoke the aid of sleep, to which they abandon themselves wholly from sunrise to sunset, when the noise of the rattles and the cries of the muezzin break the spell, announcing the approach of night, throughout which feasting is kept up to an extent the reverse of temperate.

When the weather happens to be very hot during the Ramadan, people are permitted to drink, but only on condition of bestowing alms on the poor, and of subsequently fasting for so many additional days, to make up for the loss of those during which they availed themselves of the dispensation.

With certain exceptions, any person who breaks this fast is liable to be bastinadoed, imprisoned, and fined.

The town of Doân, also called Raschîd, is situated in a kind of funnel formed by thickly-wooded mountains, down from which run many brooks of excellent water by which the country is irrigated. It contains a population of from two to three thousand, about one-fourth of which consists of Sabians, Banians, and Jews.

These Hebrews—the men at least—are of remarkable ugliness, and filthy to excess. They generally go barefooted, to avoid the trouble of taking off their shoes every time they pass a mosque or the house of a person of rank, an obligation with which they are bound to comply. Their clothing consists of nothing but a dirty woollen fouta, and a mantle of like texture and filth, passing under the left arm and fastened upon the right shoulder. They let their hair

grow to its full length, after the fashion of the Arabs of the country.

Most of these Jews are brokers, but some of them make a living by the manufacture of buskins and palm-leaf mats. They also lend out money at usurious interest to merchants trading to Sana, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf: but they carefully avoid any display of wealth, to save themselves from the extortion of the Mussulmans, who exact tribute from them.

Such, under the rod of the Islam, are the modern descendants of the prophet Isaiah and of King Solomon.

It may be owing to the difference of their occupations, perhaps, that the Jewish women of these territories have escaped the physical degeneracy so manifest in the men. Be the cause what it may, however, they are as remarkable for their beauty and tidiness as the men are for every thing the reverse. I have nowhere seen more perfect types of beauty than among these women, and it is matter of surprise to the beholder how they came by it, considering the deformity of their sires. Their style is peculiar, combining the ideality of the Oriental expression with the finely-chiseled features of the European, and marked especially by a refinement partaking of both the Greek and Roman types. Their large, dark eyes are full of fire, their complexions remarkably fair, and they are generally of middle height, with slender and graceful figures.

Like the Arab women of our Algerian colonies, they wear the kind of robe called the *djebba*, which is of some sober colored stuff, similar to that worn by the men. It is bound round the waist by a girdle of silken tissue, wrought with gold or silver. These girdles are tubular in form, like a sheath, and wadded with wool. Chains of gold are substituted for them by the wealthy.

The young girls wear their hair in long tresses, like the Bernoise, but the married women cut off or conceal their locks.

They all wear yellow slippers, embroidered with gold or silver. Stockings are unknown among them.

Their ears are pierced with two orifices, in the upper of which they wear pearls or precious stones, and in the lower large ear-rings of elegant workmanship. They wear bead necklaces, gold and silver rings on the fingers, and bracelets on the wrists and ankles.

These Jewish women seldom leave their dwellings, and their mode of life, especially that of the young girls, is very sedentary. The latter pass nearly all the day in weaving and embroidering silk, while the married women attend to domestic affairs and the management of the household concerns.

Seen from a distance, Doân looks like a fortified town. It is surrounded by a massive wall, partly of brick, partly of tebby mixed with lime, flanked by square towers at regular intervals. There are two gates—the Bab-Mekka, looking toward the northwest, and the Bab-Hadramaut, toward the south. In the center of the town there is a large citadel, in which the Nagib dwells, and which commands the whole area within the walls, comprised in a circumference of about two leagues—part of which space is covered with ruins, part laid out in gardens, and the remainder, the town of Doân proper, the streets of which, unlike those of the generality of Arab towns, are wide and well kept.

Some of these streets resemble tunnels, being arched over from the housetops at either side, reminding one of the grottoes of Pausilippo, or of the dark galleries of the Simplon. The gates of these gloomy corridors are closed at night, so that the city is then divided into several quarters having no communication with each other. Other streets are roofed over with a net-work of vines, the shade and verdure of which maintain them at a delightful temperature.

The houses, which are mostly high, are chiefly of brick or stone, though many of the inferior sort are of wood. All those of the better class have arbored terraces on the

roofs, and a projection from the second floor, the shade of which contributes much to keep the streets cool. Every house is surrounded by a colonnade, forming corridors around the ground and first floors. On these corridors the apartments open, receiving light by the doors only, which are generally very wide, so as to admit as much as possible. These rooms are long, narrow, and very high, with wooden ceilings which, in some houses, are richly ornamented, as are the doors and piazzas, with gaudily painted arabesques in relief. The ground floors and court-yards are paved with brick, or, in the houses of rich people, with square tiles of pottery-ware or slabs of marble, laid down in fancy patterns.

Doân contains about twelve mosques, all of which show marks, more or less, of the occupation of the place by the Wahabytes. The principal of these is called Dâr-el-Ulm, a building displaying a great array of columns, and of doors adorned with arabesques. In the center of the northwest wall of this mosque there is a recess, from which the iman directs the ceremonies; and to the left of this a rostrum from which he preaches. Around the building are court-yards bedewed by fountains, and surrounded by piazzas and handsome buildings, some of which are richly endowed schools, and others hospitals and asylums for paupers and lunatics. The Dâr-el-Ulm is crowned with a stately minaret.

A singular fund connected with the last-named institutions is one appropriated for the care during life, and the burial after death, of sick cranes and storks. There is a prevailing belief among the Doânites that these birds are human beings from far off lands, who, at certain seasons, take these winged forms for the purpose of coming to this country, and that, at a given moment, they return to their original human shapes until the year comes round again. It is regarded as a crime, then, to molest or kill these birds, about which absurd stories innumerable are told.

There are two or three public baths here, composed of several apartments, gradually increasing in temperature from thirty-two to forty degrees of the Réaumur thermometer. These apartments, which have no windows, are vaulted overhead, and lighted only through small holes in the roof, glazed with colored glass. The baths are open to the public all day; the men occupying them in the morning, and the women in the evening.

Around the citadel there is a large open space, where a market is held every Monday and Thursday, and upon which stands the caravanseries. These are surrounded inside and out by stalls or dark niches, hollowed out in the walls, doorless, and with windows breast high, at which the goods are displayed and the customers served.

To guard these places during the night, dogs, trained for the purpose, are kept, which discharge their duty with such zeal that, were it not for men placed at different points to watch them, innocent wayfarers might be torn in pieces by them, as has happened at Stamboul.

The inhabitants of Doân and of the oasis upon which it is built—the latter numbering from ten to twelve thousand—are remarkably industrious, as well in commercial as in agricultural pursuits. In the markets are to be found great quantities of blankets woven from wool or from camel's hair; foutas, sommadas, and all other garments worn in these regions; mats, utensils of copper and of pottery-ware; saddles and trappings of all kinds; jewelry and goldsmiths' work, and many other articles of home manufacture.

The country around, which is exceedingly fertile, is closely dotted with villages and hamlets. Large herds of camels and oxen, and flocks of sheep and goats, are maintained here.

The population is divided into several classes.

Men who work by the day or month, whether as farm.

laborers or otherwise, are considered as belonging to the lowest class.

Above these in rank are the warriors, who muster in considerable force here, and look down upon the laboring class as utterly beneath their contempt.

There are many negro slaves here, also, as well as Mouëlets or mulattoes.

The men of Doân occupy themselves in trading journeys to Sana, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, and in agricultural pursuits.

The women manufacture cordage from grass, woolen and camel's hair stuffs, silk-work and leather-work for shoes—the time not passed by them in these occupations being devoted to household management. As in all other Mussulman countries, they eat and drink separately from the men.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HADRAMAUT.

DOÂN—which is, in all probability, the Dan spoken of by Ezekiel—is, at the present day, one of the largest and most important towns of Hadramaut, ranking next after Schibâm and Térîm.

The word *Hadramaut*, literally translated, means *sudden death*; and is, in its application to the territory so called, an allusion to the frequency with which murders are committed there. For a couple of Spanish dollars, in fact, a Hadramite will undertake to rid you of an enemy at the shortest notice, reserving to himself, however, the right of killing you instead, supposing said enemy has had the tact to engage his services for a larger sum.

Hadramaut extends from Mareb on the east, along the

Indian Ocean to Oman, if we include in it the region of Mahara, which is comprised in the division called by the ancients Arabia Felix. Its towns were better known in the days of Strabo than they are at present. Next in importance to Doân comes Ghadûn, a small town lying about seven leagues to the southeast of it, where the Nagibs of Raschîd are entombed, and next to this Hadramaut, the Hadrama of Edrissi. Niebuhr mentions more than twenty towns besides, of which, however, he knew nothing beyond the names, in which he remarked a great resemblance to those transmitted to us by ancient historians and geographers.

In soil, productions, and general configuration, Hadramaut closely resembles Yémen and Mareb. Its hills are fertile and its valleys well watered, particularly in the interior, toward Aînad, where the springs are very numerous and copious. The soil requires but little labor to make it productive, superficial plowing, to the depth of some four inches, being generally found sufficient. For manure they burn the long stubble every year before the rains of autumn set in—this, with an occasional application of animal manure, being the only nurture bestowed upon the soil.

Oranges, pistachios, citrons, and coffee-plants grow freely every where, though they thrive best in some of the splendid plantations watered by artificial means.

The coffee-plant is an evergreen, growing to a height of from twelve to fifteen feet. Its branches are elastic; its bark is rough, and of a whitish color. The blossoms, which resemble those of the jasmine, exhale an agreeable perfume, and are succeeded by a fruit, green in its early stage, but red when ripe, and not unlike a cherry. Within the husk of each of these are two berries enveloped in a delicate tissue.

There are two or three harvests of coffee-berries in the year, and sometimes—as is the case with orange-trees also—flowers and fruit are to be seen on the plant at the same time. The best quality of coffee is furnished by the first

harvest, which takes place in May. The mode of gathering it is to shake down the beans upon a cloth spread beneath the bush, after which they are dried in the sun, and the berries separated from the husk by a heavy roller of wood or stone.

It is in Yémen chiefly that coffee attains its greatest luxuriance and best flavor. That of Mareb and Hadramaut is of inferior quality, and is not cultivated to an extent sufficient for the demand, most persons preferring to import the luxury from Sana or from Mocha.

Vines are here cultivated upon trellises five or six feet high.

In some parts of the country the figs are of excellent quality; but in the southern districts they are hardly ripe before decay sets in, and they become the prey of worms, a circumstance to be attributed to the intense heat by day and the heavy dews by night. Melons, for the same reason, are seldom fit for use. Apricots, pears, and apples grow in great abundance, but are generally of inferior quality and flavor.

On the slopes of the mountains are to be found pines, cedars, and vast forests of mossouacks, papaws, cocoa-trees, and *arganiers*. The latter is a thorny tree of irregular form, producing a kind of hard almond inclosed in a shell like that of a walnut. These almonds, two of which are found in each shell, are rough, and bitter to the taste, but they yield an oil much used for culinary purposes. In gathering them, the natives drive their goats under the trees and shake the fruit down among the animals, which eagerly strip off and devour the husks, of which they are very fond.

Toward Mokallâh there are forests of the cork-oak and green oak (*quercus ballota*), the latter of which produces a sweet acorn, nearly two inches long, and resembling a chestnut in flavor.

Palm-trees are plentiful in all parts of the country, affording wholesome and nutritious food to the lower classes, who

live chiefly upon dates. This tree has a conspicuous place in the poetry of the East, its elegant, flexible stem furnishing an appropriate comparison with the slender, graceful figures of the young damsels of the desert. There are many varieties of palm, each being esteemed by its particular admirers, for the size, abundance, or quality of the fruit produced by it.

In addition to these vegetable productions, I may mention, as among the most useful commonly to be found here, the saffron, the *thuya*, and other resinous trees; the sugarcane, millet, maize, wheat, and hemp; the common myrtle, and the meloukïa, or khobbaïza (*corchoris olitorius*), prized by the Arab physicians for the febrifuge and sedative qualities which they attribute to it; cassia, which they consider specific in cases of dysentery, and other disorders common in hot climates; colocynth, laudanum (*cystus arabicus*); juniper; the kind of ash that produces manna; the *terfez*, which resembles the kidney potato, its roots throwing out tubercles as large as oranges; the aloe, the cotton-tree, and the balm of Mecca (*opobalsamum*); henna, tobacco, and the *doum*, or dwarf palm, a plant much valued by the muleteers, herdsmen, and camel-drivers, who, as they journey along, plait the leaves of it into braids, of which they make mats, baskets, ropes, and other similar articles. This tree, which is also used for fuel, produces a sweetish, resinous fruit, which resembles a grape, with one stone in each berry, and is efficacious as an astringent.

Of the fauna of Hadramaut I need not speak, as it is identical with that of Mareb, already described.

The country of the Mahara, alluded to above, is inhabited by Arabs of heterogeneous race. The dromedaries bred in this district are unrivaled for fleetness, and of so docile a nature that they are easily taught to obey the voice, and to come to their names when called.

Hasec and Harmin are the chief towns of Mahara. The language of the country is so corrupted as to be difficult to

understand, but it is derived from the ancient Hamyritic tongue.

Mahara is but a poor country, its only resources being derived from its camels, sheep, and goats, though the inhabitants drive an occasional business also in the coasting trade, in piracy, and in the plunder of caravans. The Arabs of the Mahara—the *Maranites* of the ancient Greeks—feed their cattle upon fish taken from the Indian Ocean and dried in the sun. These people have neither wheat nor bread of any description, living exclusively upon fish, dates, and milk, and seldom drinking water. They are so accustomed to this diet as to be seriously inconvenienced, and subject to sickness if, in their journeys to the neighboring districts, they happen to eat bread, or any other farinaceous substance.

This country, like the desert of Akhâf, is nearly altogether composed of shifting sands, which have converted it into an arid *steppe*, the communication through which is often intercepted by the treacherous drift. On this account the traders proceeding from Mareb and Hadramaut to Oman seldom take this route, preferring to embark at Mokallâh, on board coasting vessels, by which they are carried to their destination with greater safety, comfort, and at less expense.

Having said so much about Hadramaut and Mahara, I will devote the next chapter to the subject of the Hadramites in general.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE HADRAMITES.

THE Hadramites, called Hadrâmy by the Arabs, and known to the ancient Greeks under the name of *Chatramotites*, are a remnant of the Hamyarites of old, who were descended from Djoram—the Hadoram of the Bible—one of the fourteen sons of Joktan.

Like the Cahlanides, Sabians, Khusites, and others, they have often been confounded with the Arabs proper, or *Mostarabes*, who are the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar. Nevertheless, there is a marked difference between the two peoples in appearance, costume, and disposition. The Arabs, for instance, have dark eyes and complexions, while among the Hadramites blue eyes are frequently to be observed, and their complexions are rather fair than otherwise. Again, the face of the Arab is usually narrow, and the neck long, while that of the Hadramite is square, and his head set close down upon his shoulders. Unlike the Arabs, too, the Hadramites but seldom wear any covering upon their heads, and the abbaye, so universal among the former, is but little worn by them. Their usual costume is a simple tunic of woolen stuff, to which they add, when at work, a large leathern apron, which makes them look somewhat like our blacksmiths.

The Arab loves an easy life, while the Hadramite is remarkable for his industrious habits. When the latter finds it difficult to make a living in his native country, he follows the instinct common to all mountaineers, emigrating to other parts for a season or so, perhaps for years. Descending into the plain, he hires himself out as a farm-laborer, or else tries his fortune in the towns, where he finds work as a porter, a hod-carrier, a mason, or in some

similar capacity. In this phase of his character he resembles the people of Auvergne and Savoy, of whom, in fact, he may be looked upon as the Asiatic type. Like the Swiss, too, he sometimes lends his mercenary aid as a soldier to the petty Arab princes of Hedjaz, Yémen, Oman, and Nedjéd.

In some capacity or other, he is to be met with in all Arab towns, where, by his invariable temperance, his indefatigable habits of labor, his severe economy and proverbial honesty, he manages to lay by a sum that enables him to return, some day, to the home of his boyhood. There, instead of wasting his money, like the young Arab, upon idle pleasures, or hoarding it, like the old one, with miserly affection, he lays it out upon something really of use to him: first, a matchlock, perhaps; then a dromedary; then a wife and a house, to which he afterwards adds a field or a garden; and, if any money is left after this expenditure, he puts it carefully out at interest.

The true Arab has a special passion for horses, to satisfy his fancy for which he will sacrifice thousands of dollars. Rather than walk, indeed, he will place himself astride upon a donkey, whose legs are hardly long enough to keep his off the ground. The Hadramite, on the contrary, true to his instincts as a mountaineer, is a veritable foot-soldier. His pride is mainly in his weapons, which he is perpetually burnishing into a condition of great brilliancy; unlike the Arab, who thinks a rusty sword quite as serviceable as a bright one.

In disposition, too, he differs much from the latter people, who are vain, arrogant, servile, and boastful; while the Hadramite is proud, simple, truthful, and dignified. The Arab, for instance, will bow himself down to the dust to kiss the hand of a chief whom he respects or fears; but the poorest Hadramite is exacting of the smallest courtesy which he considers to be due to him; and this to such an extent, in fact, that there is an instance of one having shot

down a reverend iman whose politeness did not come up to his ideas on the subject.

The hospitality of the Hadramite, however rich he may be, is never ostentatious, but always cordial.

He believes not in fortune-tellers, nor does he put any faith in amulets: but he has a great dread of the djinns, or *genii*, and always conjures them, in the name of the Prophet, before he ventures out into the dark. He carefully avoids, also, after nightfall, places where blood has been spilt—for the djinns are supposed to revel in blood and to rendezvous around it for the purpose of making their sport of the benighted wayfarer, whom they delight in misleading from his path.

The Hadramites go to war only in case of invasion of their territory—never for the sake of invading that of others, or for pillage. They never attack an enemy without notice, but, once engaged in hostilities, they do not give in unless overpowered by numbers; for retreat is considered disgraceful among them, and their wives, who accompany them to battle, supplying them with ammunition and encouraging them with shouts, not only jeer at them for cowards if they show any inclination to back out, but paint devices indicative of contempt upon their woolen tunics, with henna.

The Arabs, in their expeditions, are regular brigands, always trying to fall upon their enemies by surprise, and running away the moment they have discharged their weapons, to avoid the return compliments. So far as regards respect for human life, however, they have the advantage over the Hadramites, who generally behead their prisoners. Even in time of peace, indeed, the Hadramite shows a cruel and sanguinary disposition, disposing of life without remorse. A chief, for example, wishing to conceal a large amount of valuables, has been known to load one of his slaves with the treasure, drive him with it by secret paths to some

solitary place, cause him to bury it there, and then behead him with a scimeter, to make all sure.

Now the Arab, although he will sometimes take the life of his fellow-man, does so from a motive of revenge or hatred, and never in mere wantonness and cold blood.

There are no privileged classes among the Hadramites as among the Arabs, whose chériffs are noble by birth. The Hadramite attains such distinction solely by his merit, and a title remains hereditary in a family only so long as the son follows in the father's footsteps.

Hospitality is much practiced by these people, particularly by those of the oasis and town of Doân. No person need ever die of want among them; for, if a man is in distress, his more fortunate neighbors provide him with clothing and throw open their gardens to him, where he may eat as much fruit as he pleases, on condition that he does not pocket any, and, in some parts of the country, that he leaves the date-stones at the foot of the tree.

During the hard season of the year, in addition to private charities, much is done for the needy by placing a stock of provisions for their use in charge of the ministers of the mosques. To this store the indigent can have recourse at all times: but his obligation thus to subsist upon charity by no means renders him unworthy to assist in the defense of his country, for in time of war he is furnished with a matchlock and ammunition by those who clothed and fed him in time of peace.

Among the Hadramites, as among the Arabs, charity is considered as one of the divine virtues, and hence it is that poverty is not shunned by them as a plague. Without any legislation, in fact, these people, whom we look upon as barbarians, have discovered the secret of rendering mendicancy an impossibility among them. Vagrancy is not looked upon by them as a crime, and the poor man is at liberty, if he so pleases, to lead the life of a pilgrim, sure of finding a welcome everywhere.

Like the Khabyles of our Algerian possessions, the Hadramites, previous to their acceptance of the Koran, had laws of their own, some of which are still in force among them. These canons, which constitute the common law of the country, have been maintained intact for many centuries and throughout all changes of religious belief. They have been handed down traditionally through the talebs, by whom they are carefully preserved for transmission to posterity.

A peculiar feature of Hadramite law is the repudiation of the bastinado, which is never used, being looked upon as an infamous and degrading punishment. Crimes in general are punished by the infliction of fines, according to degree. Assaults, for example, are atoned for by amounts ranging from one to one hundred abû-mathfas, or Spanish dollars, the minimum being levied for a blow of the fist, and higher sums in proportion to the atrocity of the act.

Robbery and murder are punished by decapitation and quartering.

Simple robbery and larceny, by exposure in the marketplace and a fine of ten abû-mathfas.

A similar penalty is imposed upon him who enters a dwelling while the master is absent, his intention being assumed as evil whether he has committed a theft or not.

Expulsion from society is visited upon him who commits rape, or adultery. His house is leveled to the ground, his property confiscated, and a sentence of perpetual banishment passed upon him.

In this country, as in France, every available man, from the age of fifteen years, is obliged, under penalty, to take his turn as a soldier. In the different towns and villages, companies of from twenty-five to one hundred men are always on the alert, ready, at the first signal, to rally together at some common point against the marauding nomad tribes who, at certain seasons, quit their inaccessible moun-

tain retreats and descend into the plain, pillaging and plundering all they can lay their hands on.

This evening I went, in company with Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, to the citadel, where the Nagib had invited us to share his hospitality.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN THE CITADEL.—THE NAGIB SÉID-HASSAN.—PLEASURES OF THE
RAMADAN.—DEPARTURE FROM DOÂN.

THE citadel of Doân is composed of a number of immense buildings, the most conspicuous of which is the square tower in which the Nagib dwells, a two-storied structure with terraced roof. Here also are the arsenal, barracks for the guard, and quarters for people attached to the service of the Nagib. These buildings are thrown together without regard to order, and are surrounded by a wall flanked with massive bastions and defended by formidable batteries. The circumference of the whole is about sixteen hundred yards.

To reach the tower we had to pass through a vast courtyard, in which the Nagib holds his *meshouars* or public audiences. This led us to a second, in which the guard was stationed, and so on to a third, in the center of which stands a square summer-house of wood, the interior of which is tapestried and fitted up with cushions. This building is used as a kind of ante-chamber, in which the chief men of the state await the orders of the Nagib.

In the same courtyard there is a little chapel or mosque, in which the inhabitants of the citadel attend to their daily devotions, except on Fridays, when they go to the principal mosque, which is situated in the town, opposite the citadel.

We next entered a vestibule, where the slaves in waiting

were on duty, and at length we came to the garden in the center of which the tower stands. This garden, which is of regular form, is planted with orange-trees and many varieties of aromatic herbs. It contains separate *parterres* devoted exclusively to the women of the family, and to which the men have no admission.

The Nagib, Séid Hassan by name, received us upon the terraced roof, where we found him in company with some of his confidential counselors. He was a man, at that time, full of vigor and energy, and still in the summer of life; extremely popular with the Doânites, and the terror of the vagrant tribes, who conciliated him by payment of tribute, and by implicit submission to his commands. He welcomed us with courtly politeness, seating us beside him, and congratulating us on our safe arrival at Doân—after which, as we smoked and sipped our coffee, the usual catechetical examination commenced.

To the questions put to me I replied with apparent confidence but real caution—for one should never entrust an Arab with such information as he does not particularly wish to have divulged.

Presently, a stylish supper was served up, to which we did ample justice, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour.

Generally speaking, the habits of an Arab of rank are very simple. He rises early, and gets through his toilet with great rapidity, owing to the circumstance of his keeping the greater part of his clothes on during the hours of repose. He next offers up his prayers, as the voice of the muezzin reminds him of the unity of Allah and the coming of the Prophet. After this he partakes of breakfast, which consists of a cup of coffee and some confectionery, to which he sometimes adds the luxury of a pipe of hascheesh. He then mounts a horse, mule, or dromedary, and takes two or three hours' exercise, returning about noon, to dine upon highly-seasoned dishes of meat and vegetables, not forgetting the classic pillau, pride of the Arab table. Then

comes the siesta, after which he goes to the *café*, or, perchance, to the mosque; returning from which at night-fall he winds up the day by supper, or rather, a second dinner, which dispatched, he disposes himself, for the night, on the cushions which serve him for a bed.

These are the habits of an Arab aristocrat in ordinary times, but he deviates widely from them during the Ramadan, sleeping all day, and keeping it up at night by eating, drinking, smoking, gossiping and amusing himself, till morning dawns.

The moment the sun sets, all the houses and mosques are lighted up, the tops of the minarets being decorated, also, with brilliant constellations of lanterns—for at this hour the Feast of Lanterns sets in, a *fête* kept up every night during the Ramadan. The streets blaze with colored lights, flashing upon throngs of revelers, many of whom deviate considerably from the center of gravity as they push their way among the dealers in cakes, confectioneries, and other refreshments. On the terraced roofs, or in the court-yards of the dwellings, the festive time is enjoyed by the women, who regale themselves with sherbet; while around the caravansaries throng crowds of men and boys, looking on, till the hour of morning prayer, at the dancing jugglers, or listening to the tremulous melodies of the singers, chanted to the accompaniment of mandoline and darboukah.

The *cafés* are also much frequented by the men, some of whom there procure ecstatic visions of paradise by inhaling the fumes of hascheesh, while others play at chess, draughts or backgammon, or listen to the endless recitals of the storytellers.

Of this last-mentioned pastime we had much experience at supper, this evening; for, although a Mussulman repast is carried on in silence, on ordinary occasions, it is otherwise during the Ramadan, when the talents of the *raconteur* are called into requisition at the festive hour of the evening meal. This art of narrating is, in Arabia, a sure passport to fortune.

But few succeed in it, however, for it requires great natural talent, improved by study, to attain to any proficiency in it. Nor is it sufficient for the narrator merely to know a great many romances: he must, also, be skilled in varying the subjects by the introduction of new incidents, and must have his memory stored with passages from the most popular poets and moralists, wherewith to embellish his narrative.

After supper, we had the indispensable pipes and coffee, a few remarks on which luxuries may not be out of place here.

The Arabs have a perfect passion for coffee—that is to say for the husk of the berry, the bean, or kernel being in general exported by them as an article of trade. Their coffee, however, made by pounding these husks into a fine powder, instead of grinding them, is as thick as mud, so that they may be said to eat rather than drink it. The decoction is made in the same manner as our coffee; but, instead of letting it settle, they shake the coffee-pot to stir up the grounds, so that, when poured out, it resembles very thick chocolate. It is usually made without sugar, and they drink it from small cups without saucers, but placed inside larger cups so as to protect the hand from the heat, as already described.

It would not be easy to give an idea of the solemn gravity with which a Hadramite sips his coffee. So long as the ceremony lasts—some ten minutes, perhaps—a profound silence reigns over the assembled company, broken only by the smacking of lips engaged in sucking up small gulps of the precious beverage, which the drinker holds in his mouth for a few seconds, so as fully to enjoy the flavor. In drinking coffee, it is considered the proper thing to take the cue from the most distinguished member of the company, etiquette forbidding the others to finish their cups until he has disposed of his.

With regard to tobacco, there are two kinds of pipes for smoking it in use among the Arabs—the *chiboque*, which is

chiefly used by the lower classes, and the *chica*, confined to the rich and aristocratic.

The *chica*, which answers to the *narghiléh* of the Turks and the *calioun* of the Persians, is so arranged that the smoke passes through a decanter of perfumed water. An Arab of fashion never lights the *chica* himself. The slave whose business it is to attend to it, takes off the crystal mouthpiece from the flexible stem, and replaces it by one of wood, at which he sucks until the tobacco is kindled. This wooden mouthpiece is also put on whenever the *chica* is offered to a guest, the crystal one being reserved exclusively for the master's lips.

The tobacco used for the *chica* is different from that smoked with a *chiboque*. It is called *tomback*—and the kind most in repute among people of rank is brought from Schiraz, in Persia. It is always damped before putting it into the *chica*, on which account it is somewhat difficult to light.

Women smoke the *chica* nearly as habitually as men, always offering one to their guests the first thing after coffee.

The Hadramites conduct themselves with intense gravity during the process of smoking, inhaling the vapor into the lungs, where they retain it until a slight spasmodic sensation is produced, when they breathe it slowly out, fanning it downward with the hand, so as to perfume the beard with the aromatic fumes.

To-night, after Seïd-Hassan had indulged himself in a score or so of these fragrant whiffs, he tested my abilities by propounding several enigmas, a kind of mental exercise in which the Arabs excel. When these had been disposed of, Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni and some others of the company took their turn at romancing, amusing us with no end of anecdotes and wondrous tales until the hour of morning prayer approached, when the party broke up.

The three following days were passed by me in taking

notes, visiting my traveling companions of the caravan, and making preparations for my departure from Doân, to which the réis made great opposition, reiterating his request that I would remain at his house until his return from Sana, or, at least, until the close of the Ramadan.

"Well, since it must be so, it must," said he, with a sigh, when I told him that I certainly should depart on the morrow; "but you must at least allow me to select an escort for you, for without one you could not go ten leagues without being robbed by the Khafir-el-Arianin, or by the brigands of the desert of Mahara, who keep the watch at all the passes on the route for the purpose of levying contributions upon caravans. The escort will bring you safely through these, while the anaya (passport) with which I provide you will ensure for you the respect of my countrymen, the Hadramites."

With these words the réis clapped his hands, on which a slave appeared, who was dispatched by him for Aaïn-el-Châhin, or *Hawk-eye*, the chief of the chouafs.

To this officer of caravans I was formally made over by the réis, who instructed him to take four men, and escort me with them as far as Mokallâh, protecting myself and my people against all aggression and insult.

"Father," rejoined Aaïn-el-Châhin, on receiving these commands, "I am honored by this mark of your confidence. The Hadji shall be guarded by me as though he were my brother, and I here take upon myself, in the presence of him and his people, the whole responsibility of the journey, which will be a fatiguing, disagreeable, and dangerous one, but over which, with the help of Allah, we will manage to get."

And, having said so much, Aaïn-el-Châhin, putting down one of his pistols as security for the performance of his contract, recited the famous *Fi-laihati* upon my beard—an oath, the solemnity of which is such that nothing further was to be said on the subject.

After dinner two slaves came from Seïd-Hassan, bringing me a stock of provisions for the journey and a very corpulent purse—the latter being offered to me, as the slave who presented it said, by way of *coffee-money* on the route to Schibâm—that being the term used by the Arabs when apologizing for a pecuniary gift.

On opening this purse I found it to contain five hundred thalers, an amount which placed me in an embarrassing position, for I had done no service to the Nagib as an equivalent for it, nor did I know what to offer him in return. I had still three or four handsome double-barreled guns, however, besides some pistols and blade-weapons, from which stock I selected the best of the guns, which I dispatched to the citadel, together with two boxes of caps and a handsome poniard of European manufacture.

Seïd-Hassan sent back the gun, with thanks, and a request that I would give him a lancet instead. I sent him two; but, as he had no idea of the manner of using them, I was obliged to go to the citadel to instruct him. For this purpose I requested him to send for some one on whom I could practice, but he insisted upon my illustrating the process upon himself, until I told him that, as he was not in want of blood-letting, the operation might have a bad effect upon his health. Upon this he contented himself with my putting the ligature on his arm, and showing him how the blade should be applied to the swollen vein.

Next morning I had visits from my friends and from the principal people of Doân, who came to take leave of me, according to usage.

In the afternoon Aaïn-el-Châhin came to tell me that our dromedaries would be at the door at half-past seven; and by eight o'clock they were all loaded and ready to start. Abû-Bekr-el-Doâni, to whom I paid two hundred thalers, receiving from him my passport, accompanied me for more than a league on my way, together with Abd'el-Mélick and the venerable Nassib.

Then we took leave of each other, and it was with sincere regret that I parted from my friends. Abû-Bekr-el-Doâni had tears in his eyes as he grasped my hand for the last time, saying :

“Do not forget to let me hear from you, Hadji; and remember that Aaïn-el-Châhin and his chouafs are responsible for the safety of you and your people. Farewell, and may good luck attend you !”

With which words he urged his dromedary to full speed to conceal his emotion, and returned with his companions northward, on the road to the town, while we steered onward, south by southwest.

CHAPTER XL.

FROM DOÂN TO GREÏN.

It was on Saturday, the ninth of September, 1844, that we entered on our twenty-first stage, the road leading us through a narrow, silent valley, between two abrupt mountains, half way in which we halted for a short time to rest our animals, so that morning had begun to dawn as we emerged from it.

And what a sight then met our gaze ! Let the reader imagine himself within view of vast deserts to the southwest, and thenceward to the far-off countries toward sunset, his vision intercepted only by great rugged mountain peaks, capped with heavy clouds, and washed at their base by rivers which formerly, according to Strabo, rolled onward their impetuous course over sands of gold. Around us extends a region the primitive aspect of which proclaims that it owes nothing to the hand of man—a world such as the world might have been on the

morning of its creation, bearing as yet the impression of the mould from which it was cast by the mighty Craftsman, and suggesting to the mind an imposing image of the greatness and omnipotence of God, whose breath alone animates the majestic solitude of these mountains, whose voice only is heard in the rush of their torrents.

Follow me with the mind's eye into the midst of these scenes of uncultivated beauty and wild sublimity.

We stand on a vast plain, the distance of which is lost to the view: nothing but that plain as we look to the south, the east, and the west, except the spangled blue of heaven stretching overhead and all around. No hill, not so much as a rock, comes between us and the line of the horizon; and upon the wide land that stretches away from us the eye can discern neither earth nor turf—nothing but shrubs and flowers!

Shrubs and flowers as far as the eye can reach—and these of the most gorgeous beauty.

Gazing on this spectacle, we can fancy ourselves standing before a brilliant picture upon which some skilled painter has combined with art all the prismatic colors. Yonder, where shines that gleam of gold, grows the sunflower, turning toward the dawn the broad sundial disks of its burnished medallions. Further yet there stretches a purple streak, combined of the unfolded banners of the belladonna and the poppy. Here the euphorbium and the rose of Jericho spread their silver treasures, while, hard by, the asclepias flaunt with pride the orange glories of their brilliant petals.

The breeze plays over all, waving like standards the bright patches of shrubs and flowers, and rocking the great sunflowers on their tall stems until the distant plain undulates like a vast lake of golden billows. The air is loaded with a perfume of blossoms innumerable, amid which troops of birds flutter, and myriads of insects wheel in wavering flight.

The great goliath butterfly unfolds to the morning sun his painted wings, which gleam in the rosy light, as, bending over the calyx of some jeweled flower, he plunges greedily his fringed proboscis into the balmy goblet; while the bee, already laden with the fruits of his morning toil, clings and climbs among the blossoms, or shoots humming away to his home, there to deposit his precious burden.

Nature here is draped in her richest mantle—a mantle compared with which the most costly tissue of the Vale of Cashmere is but a poor fabric.

But morning had hardly dawned ere the whole scene changed. We are still traversing a vast plain, the limits of which are lost to the eye; but the blossoms and the flowers have vanished from our gaze, which now rests upon a boundless extent of verdure, resembling the steppes of Mongolia, the pampas of South, or the prairies of North America. Every where the earth is green as an emerald, smooth as a lake; while the passing breeze ripples the surface of the yielding herbage, breaking up the wide plain into waves of light and shade. There is nothing to arrest the wandering eye, except, now and then, the massive form of a wild ox, the graceful figure of a slender-limbed gazelle, or the shady grove that embowers the tranquil fountain—monument of the piety of some wealthy Hadramite, who, on his death-bed, willed religiously an endowment for the structure, which might haply serve as a memorial of his sojourn upon earth.

There are many of these fountains here, simple, for the most part, in design, but by no means devoid of grace and elegance. Generally speaking, they consist of a tank, at the bottom of which there is a spout, with a goblet for the use of the thirsty traveler, and a stone basin at which his cattle may drink. At the top of the fountain there is an inscription, graven in the picturesque characters of the Arabic tongue. These inscriptions, consisting in general of a few verses from the Koran, are sometimes gilt, sometimes

wrought in black relief, on the white, polished surface of the stone.

Each fountain is enshrined in a cluster of wide-spreading shady trees, which stretch out their long arms as if to embrace the stony structure, or, soaking their thirsty foliage in the tank, scatter a refreshing dew around, as their branches are agitated by the cool breeze.

These fountains are so numerous that many of them have been suffered to go to ruin, and have become the retreat of the hyena and jackal. The sound of our footsteps aroused these animals now and then, and we could see them peering at us with surprised look, from the tops of their watch-towers, and following us with their eyes until a bend of the road hid them from our view.

About four o'clock a change again comes over the scene. We have still before us the vast grassy meadow, but it is no longer flat and unbroken, presenting now to the eye a series of parallel undulations which might almost be termed hills, all covered with the most luxuriant verdure, and suggesting to the fancy, by their rolling rise and fall, the idea of a storm-tossed sea, transformed into solid earth by the magic wand of some enchanter.

At six o'clock the scene is again shifted. Our way still lies in the midst of verdure and flowers, but now tall groves of palm-trees, rising out from thick, low copse-wood, appear upon the horizon, their bright, feathery foliage cutting out sharply against the morning sky.

And so it is ever as we advance, landscape succeeding landscape in endless variety. Scenes of the most picturesque combinations are thrown open to the enchanted eye, animated by the distant forms of camels, sheep, and goats, while the crane and the stork pitch down from aloft into the shady thickets, and the guinea-fowl springs up before us as we wend our way over the tufted plain.

We are now approaching an inhabited tract, for in the distance we can descry gardens where many fruit-trees

grow, and well cultivated fields stretch away on every side, some of them waving with grain ready for the sickle of the reaper, others breaking up into russet furrows, beneath the bar of the gliding plow. Most of the plowmen are aged and decrepit negroes, some of whom quit their work at our approach, and stand gaping at us from the hedges.

While I was gazing with admiration upon this charming scene, a long, advancing file of camels came within our view, preceded by a negro seated majestically upon an ass, and girdled somewhat ostentatiously with a belt containing a brace of pistols. He was intently engaged in smoking a chibouque, the wreaths arising from which he watched in solemn silence, as they curled away in fantastic spiral lines until lost in air. A rope of palm-leaves, fastened to the neck, and passing between the legs of the little beast on which he was mounted, was attached to the head of the foremost camel, from whence it passed along the whole procession, stringing the animals together to the last in the line, round the neck of which hung a small bell, the tinkle of which bore assurance to the ears of the listless negro that his train was all right, so that he went on his lazy way without troubling himself about it.

Behind this convoy of camels came another, having a mule laden with baggage as file-leader. Two other lazy negroes dawdled along after this cortège, abandoning themselves so exclusively to sociable gossip by the way, that the conduct of the line was left entirely to the discretion of the mulish file-leader, in whom their confidence proved to have been misplaced—for, as the train skirted by a field of clover, the mule, fascinated by its luxuriant verdure, plunged incontinently into the deep herbage, followed by the complacent camels, and presently the whole convoy was feasting merrily in the field.

The camels, as they shambled to and fro on their tall, slender legs, soon destroyed all traces of the furrows, traced with hard labor by a Hadramite plowman, who was at

work close by where the clover grew—on seeing which devastation the cultivator ran shouting toward the invaders of his territory, filling the mule with such consternation that it broke the leading-rope and scampered away. Two ill-educated camels, improving the opportunity, also snapped their bonds, and in a moment the whole caravan was thrown into confusion.

I looked at the lazy negroes, expecting to behold in them pictures of utter despair, but they took the matter much more coolly than the plowman, upon whom one of them now heaped all manner of insults and reproaches, accusing him of having put the camels to flight with his discordant yells. To this the cultivator retorted with energy, and while the two belligerents were thus exhausting the slang of the Arab language in keeping up their interchange of hostilities, the other negro, chorusing our mirth at the sight of this picturesque stampede, informed us that the camels were laden with melons and other fruits, on their way as a present to the Nagib of Doân. He soon rejoined his comrade, however, helping him out with his tirades against the plowman, and presently we saw them coupling up the truant camels, which they lugged into their places by the ears, as a pedagogue does his truant scholars.

Having cast a lingering look upon this glorious landscape, as it lay bathed in the mellow light of an autumnal sun, we continued our journey, arriving, by half-past seven in the morning, at Greïn, a small village eight leagues from Doân, and situated upon the southern limit of the oasis of that name.

CHAPTER XLI.

SOJOURN AT GREÏN.—THE FLEAS.

As the caravansary was at the further extremity of the village, our way to it lay through a labyrinth of streets crowded with people, and flaunting with goods exposed for sale. Sommadas of all colors moved to and fro, contrasting with black-bearded visages of tawny sun-burnt hue, as the crowd swayed around the stalls, buying, selling, and driving hard bargains; while, ever and anon, as we crushed in amid a group gaping around some Jew who had European curiosities for sale, or pressing forward to have a peep at some attraction equally great, maledictions and emphatic epithets arose from beneath the sommadas, addressed chiefly to Aaïn-el-Châhin, who continued to move on, however, with steadfast purpose, crying to the multitude to clear the way.

This mighty turmoil in the time of Ramadan, contrasting so strangely with the normal stillness of Arab communities, stunned me so that I deviated from the main street, and plunged recklessly into a chaos of narrow lanes that ran in every direction.

Some of these alleys were dry, while others were washed by little brooklets, which came rushing down over great stone flags.

In the middle of these rivulets stalked our camels, plashing up the water with their great platter feet, and sending muddy jets of it into the faces of the Hadramites who happened to be passing, who, disturbed out of their habitual gravity by the cold contact, invoked imprecations upon us, consigning to the bottom of the seventh hell the upstart travelers who dared thus to insult peaceably-disposed believers.

Arrived at our destination, we alighted in the court-yard of a kind of caravansary, a structure open on all sides, and swarming, like the streets, with a throng of idle loungers—some walking to and fro, others gaping at a story-teller, and the rest sleeping.

About ten o'clock the sheik of the place came to visit us, accompanied by slaves laden with the materials for a repast. These consisted of pillau, boiled mutton, dates, and milk—a spread to which Aaïn-el-Châhin and his four chouafs did ample justice; for the Hadramites, like the genuine Arabs, are always hungry.

While we were at breakfast a crowd of little negroes kept prowling about us, throwing themselves with avidity upon the date-stones shot at them by my companions, which they sucked eagerly at second-hand. I took compassion upon these children of adversity, and, when our meal was over, distributed among them the remains of the feast.

Our animals were as well cared for as their masters.

After breakfast, coffee and pipes, and conversation, and then the siesta. But I had hardly consigned myself to repose, when I was aroused by bites insufferable, to investigate the cause of which I arose from my couch.

Horribile visu! I was literally covered with fleas, from head to foot.

"What ails you, Hadji?" asked Aaïn-el-Châhin, as he saw me shaking out my garments.

"Nothing but fleas, Sidi, and I am hunting them," replied I.

"Hunting fleas!" exclaimed he, "you commit sacrilege then: has not the Prophet said, 'Kill not the fleas, for they are the hosts of Allah?'"

"True; we should not kill them so long as they do us no harm," rejoined I, "but, otherwise, it is lawful to put them to death. They trouble me sorely, as you perceive: therefore I make war upon them."

"Your words are not those of a true believer, Hadji,"

sad Aaïn-el-Châhin. "Listen to what Abu-Taleb, the cousin of the Prophet, says :

" "We were seated at our repast,' relates he, 'when a flea alighted upon my cheek.

" "Abd'Allah, my father, having caught the insect, asked the envoy of Allah to read for him the legend written upon its body, whereupon the envoy of Allah read :

" " "I am Allah, and there is no other God but me : I am the God of the fleas, which derive their sustenance from me ; and I send them upon the people to warn them when I choose, and to punish them when it so pleases me." " "

"That is the second authority you have cited to prove me in the wrong," said I to Aaïn-el-Châhin, when he had spoken. "Now I am going to quote one in my own favor, again in the words of Abu-Taleb, who says :

" "Another time the envoy of Allah read upon the body of a flea an inscription in Hebrew characters, which ran as follows :

" "We are the hosts of the Most High, we lay ninety-nine eggs each, and such are our numbers that, if we laid a hundred the world would be devastated by us.

" "Then the Prophet exclaimed in his terror :

" "O Allah ! destroy their young ones, slay their chiefs, and shut up the mouths of all of them, that the skin of the Mussulman may escape their bites. Do this, O thou who hearest the prayers of the faithful !

" "At this invocation, the angel Gabriel appeared unto the Prophet and said :

" "O envoy of Allah ! thy prayers are heard !" "

Having delivered this quotation I proceeded with my flea-hunt. Nevertheless, Aaïn-el-Châhin held to his opinion, citing new authorities in support of it, Haroun-el-Raschid among others. His reminiscences of the latter being incomplete, however, I took a volume of "The Thousand and One Nights," from my saddle-bags, and turning to *Enis-el-Djelis*,

or "The History of the Fair Persian," read to him as follows.*

" . . . Sheik-Ibrahim stretched forth his hand, took the goblet, and drained it.

"Filling up another, Enis-el-Djelis handed it to him, but he refused it, saying—"I swear to you that I can drink no more."

"'By Allah,' then said Enis-el-Djelis, 'you can not refuse me.'

"Whereupon Sheik-Ibrahim took the goblet, and drained it as he had done the first.

"Then Enis-el-Djelis handed him a third, and Sheik-Ibrahim was going to drink it, when suddenly Ali-Nour-Eddyn sat straight up and said:

"'How is this? Did I not, just now, ask you to drink, and did you not refuse, saying—"It is thirteen years since I have done any thing like this?"'

"Sheik-Ibrahim held his peace, for he was embarrassed, but at length he replied—"The fault is not mine, it is your companion who is to blame."

"At this, Ali-Nour-Eddyn and Enis-el-Djelis burst out laughing, and Sheik-Ibrahim laughed with them.

"A moment afterwards, Enis-el-Djelis said to Ali-Nour-Eddyn, in a whisper: 'Drink alone, and do not invite our host to join you. By and by I will make you merry at his expense.'

"And thus saying, she filled up the goblet of Ali-Nour-Eddyn, and presented it to him, who filled another and handed it to her, and this interchange they kept up for some time.

"'What do ye that for?' asked Sheik-Ibrahim as he

* This extract I translated myself from the original Arabic. The existing versions would not have answered my purpose, as none of them appear to have been written with a clear appreciation of the true sense of "The Thousand and One Nights."

watched them—‘a strange way that of keeping company, in sooth!’

“Whereupon the two young people laughed still louder, drank again, and made Sheik-Ibrahim drink also.

“They kept this up until the night was far advanced, when Enis-el-Djelis said to Sheik-Ibrahim: “May I light one of these wax-candles that stand all in a row?”

“‘Certainly,’ replied he, ‘but on condition that you light one only.’

“Then Enis-el-Djelis arose, and, beginning with the first candle, lit up the whole eighty.

“This done, Ali-Nour-Eddyn addressed himself to Sheik-Ibrahim, saying: ‘If I am of any consideration with you, will you not allow me to light up one of these eighty lamps that stand all in a row?’

“‘By all means, replied Sheik-Ibrahim, ‘but you must light no more than one.’

“Upon which Ali-Nour-Eddyn began to light them and did not stop until he had lighted them all, and then the palace seemed to dance before their eyes.

“Now Allah, who knows all and has a reason for every thing, willed that the Caliph should be seated, at this very moment, before a window of his palace that looked out upon the Tigris, and turned his eyes toward the point where this scene was passing. The reflections thrown upon the river by the lamps and candles caught his view, which then fell upon the pavilion in the garden, within which these lights were blazing.

“‘Send forthwith for Djafar the Barmecide!’ exclaimed he.

“The Vizier came at his command.

“‘Wretch!’ said the Caliph, addressing him, ‘you call yourself my servant, and yet you advise me not of what is going on in my capital. If the city of Bagdad is still mine, how comes it that the Palace of Pleasure is thus lighted up with all its lamps and candles?’

“ ‘And who says, O prince of believers! that the Palace of Pleasure is lighted up?’ asked Djafar, as his legs shook under him.

“ ‘Come hither and look,’ replied the Caliph.

“The Vizier approached, looked toward the garden, and beheld issuing from the pavilion a blaze of light that paled the moonbeams, in excuse for which he bethought him of laying all the blame upon Sheik-Ibrahim, the keeper of the garden.

“ ‘O prince of believers!’ said he, ‘Sheik-Ibrahim came to me a week ago, and, saying that he wished to make a festival for his kinsfolk, asked me to obtain permission for him to celebrate, in the Palace of Pleasure, the circumcision of his youngest child. I told him to do as he pleased, saying, that I would mention it to the Caliph, so please Allah, the next time I saw him. Thereupon he left me, and I forgot to speak to you about it.’

“ ‘O Djafar!’ said the Caliph, ‘hitherto I have caught you tripping only once, but now you are doubly culpable in my eyes. In the first place, you were wrong in neglecting to mention the matter to me, and, in the second, in not fulfilling the expectations of Sheik-Ibrahim, whose request was merely a subterfuge to obtain money from you wherewith to defray the cost of his festival. But you neither gave him money yourself, nor could I have given him any, since you had not notified me of the matter.’

“ ‘I forgot to do so, O prince of believers!’ replied Djafar.

“ ‘Well, then,’ continued the Caliph, ‘I swear by my fathers that I will pass the rest of this night in the society of none but Sheik-Ibrahim; he is a pious man, who frequents the mosques, seeks the society of the talebs, and relieves the poor. I will lay a wager that he is surrounded by such companions at this moment; but, to assure ourselves of the fact, let us go to him. Haply we may meet there with some holy men, whose prayers may avail us in this world and in

the one to come. Perchance, also, our visit may be of some service to Sheik-Ibrahim himself or to his friends.'

" 'O prince of believers!' exclaimed Djafar, 'the night is already so far advanced that the guests must be thinking, by this time, of retiring.'

" 'Let us go, then, at once,' said the Caliph; and they went out from the palace, disguised as merchants, and followed, at a little distance, by Mesrour.

" Having arrived at their destination, the Caliph said to Djafar: 'I am going to climb into this walnut-tree, the branches of which grow near the windows, so that I can see what they are doing within before we make our appearance among them;' and, with these words, he mounted into the tree, clambering from branch to branch until he found one which was just opposite an open window.

" From thence he looked down into the hall, where he saw Sheik-Ibrahim seated, goblet in hand, between a youth and a young girl of dazzling beauty, and heard him saying to the latter:

" 'O queen of beauty! drink without music is but a dull pastime. Hear what the poet says:

" 'Send round the nectar in a large goblet; and take it from the hands of a cup-bearer like unto a full moon.

" 'Drink not, however, unless to the sound of music. The horse drinks with pleasure to the whistle of his master.'

" When the Caliph saw this the veins of his forehead swelled with passion. He descended from the tree, and said to Djafar:

" 'Among all the wonders of heaven and the miracles performed by holy men, I have never seen any thing to be compared to what I have just now beheld. Climb up the tree, and look in.'

" Djafar climbed into the top of the tree and looked down into the hall, where the scene beheld by the Caliph met his view. He gave himself up for lost.

" 'Wo betide him who has brought these people hither,

and admitted them into my pavilion!’ said the Caliph to him when he had come down: ‘nevertheless, I must again avow that I have never seen any thing to equal the beauty of that young girl and her companion, either in face or form.’

“‘True, O prince of believers!’ cried Djafar, who thought that he saw, in these words of the Caliph, some chance of escape.

“‘Let us again mount into the tree and have another look,’ said the Caliph; and they both climbed up again into the walnut-tree.

“‘O my!’ said Sheik-Ibrahim, at this moment, to his two guests, ‘the wine has caused me to be forgetful of gravity and propriety; but what is it all without the twang of the strings?’

“‘O Sheik-Ibrahim!’ rejoined Enis-el-Djelis, ‘if we had but some instrument of music how happy we should be!’

“At these words the Sheik arose, went out for a moment, and returned with a lute, which the Caliph recognized as the lute of Ishack, his boon companion.

“‘Now, by Allah!’ exclaimed the Caliph, ‘if this girl sings, and sings badly, I will hang up the whole of you together; but if she sings well, I will pardon them and hang you alone.’

“‘O Allah!’ cried Djafar, ‘cause her to sing badly, then.’

“‘And wherefore that wish?’ demanded the Caliph.

“‘Because,’ replied the Vizier, ‘if you hang us all together we shall have company, at least.’

“At this the Caliph laughed.

“Meantime, Enis-el-Djelis had taken the lute and tuned it, and was now touching the strings with a melody that might have softened iron, or breathed intellect into an idiot, while she sang, to the accompaniment, the words of a love-song.

“‘Now, I swear by Allah!’ exclaimed the Caliph to his

Vizier, 'I have never in my life heard a voice to be compared to that for sweetness!'

"And Djafar thought, within himself, that the anger of the prince of believers was mollified.

"They descended from the tree, and the Caliph said to his companion: 'It is absolutely necessary, Djafar, that you should devise some means by which I can obtain a nearer view of these people, for I wish to be informed on all points, beyond the possibility of deception.' And, as he spoke thus, they bent their steps toward the Tigris, their minds full of what they had just seen.

"On the bank of the river they found a fisherman, casting his nets, for a living, just beneath the windows of the palace.

"Now, some time previously, the Caliph had sent for Sheik-Ibrahim, to inquire of him the meaning of a noise often heard by him under the palace windows.

"'It is caused by the fishermen, who come hither to cast their nets,' answered the Sheik.

"'Go, then, and forbid them to fish here any more,' commanded the Caliph: and it was done as he ordered.

"Nevertheless, it so happened that, this night, a fisherman named Kerim passed by the garden, and, perceiving the gate open, thought he might infringe the prohibition. The Caliph recognized him, and called to him by name.

"'O prince of believers!' cried Kerim, shaking all over as he detected the Caliph, 'I do not this in despite of your commands, but am driven to it, solely, by poverty and want.'

"'Wilt thou fish for my good luck?' continued the Caliph, without taking notice of the poor wretch's exclamations of distress.

"Reassured by these gentle words, the fisherman waded out into the river, cast his nets, and, having waited until they sank to the bottom, drew them, bringing with them such a quantity of fish, of all kinds, as would not have been easy to count.

"Then the Caliph ordered the fisherman to divest himself of his garments.

"And Kerim immediately stripped off his garments, which simply consisted of a djebba, patched up with more than a hundred bits of coarse woollen stuff, and swarming to that extent with fleas of the tailed kind, that it might almost have walked about without any other assistance.

"He also took off his turban, which he had not untied once in three years, contenting himself by concealing, beneath a new fold, the holes worn in it from time to time.

"This done, the Caliph divested himself of his robes of silk from the looms of Alexandria and Balbec, also of his cashmere muffler and his mantle, with all of which he forced Kerim to invest himself, while he put on the djebba and turban of the latter instead, saying to him—"There, now you may go back to your business."

"The poor fisherman fell down at the feet of the Caliph to thank him, reciting the two following verses:

"'Thou hast loaded me with benefits, for which I can never thank thee worthily: thou hast filled up the measure of my wishes.

"'So long as I live, I will offer thankgivings unto thee: and, after I die, my bones shall offer them unto thee from the tomb.'

"Kerim had hardly ceased to speak, when the vermin began to travel all over the body of the prince of believers, *who clapped one hand here, and the other there, in his attempts to catch and shake them off.*" . . .

"Enough, enough!" here interrupted Aaïn-el-Châhin, "I know the end of the story, and must give in. But how can you get rid of the brood of tormentors?—for it is my opinion that if you hunted them for a year they would be there still."

"Let not that disturb you, Sidi," replied I; "I will find means to get rid of them."

And now, the siesta over, and Aaïn-el-Châhin gone away,

I took from my medicine-chest a box of Neapolitan ointment, with which I anointed myself all over.

Then dinner came, after which we resumed our route.

CHAPTER XLII.

IN A FOREST.

ABOUT eleven o'clock to-night—Sunday, the tenth of September, 1844—having made some five leagues since our departure from Grein, we dismounted near a cluster of hovels occupied by Arab herdsmen and Khafir-el-Arianin, and situated upon the bank of a stream, in the depths of a great forest of arganiers, mossouacks, papaws, and cocoa-trees.

The night was dark, and the objects by which we were surrounded loomed out in strange, fantastic forms by the red light of our camp-fires.

All around us stood trees of great size, the bare branches of which stretched out over our heads like giant arms. It was the effect of old age probably that the bark had peeled off from the trunks of these trees, about the roots of which it lay in broad scales. Around these venerable trunks parasitical creepers wound themselves like serpents, squeezing them in their twisted coils as if to strangle them; while from the branches weird mosses hung down in heavy festoons, recalling to mind the melancholy draperies of the funeral car.

Huge, half-rotten boles lay here and there upon the earth, hollowed out by the hand of time into cavities, in the recesses of which the hedgehog and porcupine had made their homes.

My companions, wrapped in their coverlets, slept soundly

upon the couch of dead leaves, with their feet to the fire and their heads pillowed upon their saddles—while our dromedaries, couched around, appeared also to have abandoned themselves to repose.

I remained awake, watchful and listening.

The wind sighed among the tree-tops, as it waved to and fro their nodding plumes, bringing plaintive sounds from the interlacing branches. The camp-fire crackled; the dry leaves, tossed by the wind, rustled with a sad, whispering sough; the mournful cry of the osprey came upon the breeze, and now and then the bark of dogs and the yelp of jackals smote upon the ear from afar.

These are the voices of the night in the forests of Hadramaut—uncouth voices perhaps, but such as, nevertheless, found their echo in my heart. They spoke of solitude, and I never heard them without experiencing a profound sentiment of melancholy.

Morning began to dawn while we were still in the forest, revealing to us the luxuriant foliage with which the trees were crowned, so brilliant in its varied hues as to resemble a great basket of flowers, in which gold, and purple, and orange, and bronze were mingled together in wild confusion. The forest was now in its fullest glory, and the birds warbed joyously in its shady recesses, as they rambled among the branches.

The rays of the morning sun struggled through the interstices of the vast, leafy dome, flashing here and there upon the gaudy jerkin of some blue-jay, or the gorgeous vest of an orange-colored lory, sporting in the topmost branches. Lower down, upon the slender sprays of the papaws, or amid the yellowing leaves of some tufted bush, the red-bird leaped and warbled—while crowds of insects wheeled in every direction, opening to the coming sun the flashing jewels of their burnished wings.

The air teemed with sounds indicative of life and love. The chatter of the squirrel mingled with the plaintive cooing

of the turtle, and the monotonous song of the cicada went merrily to the measured tap of the woodpecker, as he sounded with his beak the trunk of some ancient tree—from the branches of which came, perchance, the sharp note of the mocking-bird, crying ever, like his congener of the American woodlands, for all the other singers to hold their peace and hearken to him alone.

Just as we were ready to resume our journey, one of the four chouafs of Aaïn-el-Châhin, by name Khaled, plunged into the depths of the forest and disappeared from view.

“Be not surprised, Hadji,” said Aaïn-el-Châhin, anticipating my question as to the meaning of this movement; “the boy snuffs up something good in the air, you may depend upon it, and will rejoin us before long.”

Upon this I gave the signal for starting, and we were once more upon the route. Hardly had we gone half a league, however, when a Bedouin emerged from a thicket a few paces ahead of us, and, advancing toward me, threw down two or three dozen pigeons at the feet of my dromedary. This was Khaled, who now remounted his animal with the tranquil air of a man who had accomplished his task, telling us that the birds, which were young ones just ready to fly, were taken by him from the nests.

I had heard many marvelous stories about the numbers of pigeons to be seen in these roosts, as the recesses of the forest in which they congregate are termed, and I now proposed, therefore, that we should visit one of them.

“That is easily done,” said Khaled; “there is one not far from our route, about a league ahead of us. Let us move on now, keeping silence in the line.”

As we approached the roost we discovered multitudes of pigeons fluttering among the branches over our heads, their numbers increasing as we advanced, until the very trees seemed to be endowed with life and movement by them—while our passage through them caused an astounding flutter of wings and a strange, gurgling din.

Every tree was literally taken possession of, and covered to the ends of all its branches by masses of these buoyant creatures, mingling with the shady foliage and ranged in regular lines upon the boughs, in the most perfect order. A hen-house odor pervaded the whole place. The young birds were just sufficiently fledged to hazard short flights from tree to tree, under the guidance of their parents.

As we plunged in among them, the birds would only change their places and remove to a short distance. Our presence did not seem in the least to disconcert them, each family appearing to be too intent upon domestic arrangements to take any notice of the troop of strange visitors. Our movement among these living masses, which opened to make way for us, was like that of a ship, tracking its way with a foaming wake through the surging ocean.

To some of us the effect was astounding, nor can I compare the impression made upon me by this wondrous tumult to anything except, perhaps, the sensation experienced by a man suddenly plunged into the midst of a great turmoil of people from previous solitude and silence.

The unnatural indifference of these birds to our presence contributed much to my feeling of surprise, filling me with an awful sense of the prevalence of some mysterious influence. For some minutes we advanced in silence through the feathered myriads, absorbed in admiration of the works of the Creator. Surprise had taken away the power of speech, nor, had we spoken, indeed, could our voices have been heard through the mighty roar of wings with which the air was filled; for, although the pigeon individually is by no means a noisy bird, yet can the forest by no means repose in its ordinary silence where myriads of them are gathered together in a space some thousand yards square.

Aaïn-el-Châhin and his chouafs looked on with calm indifference, for they had many a time before visited the pigeon-roosts, and the mysteries of the forest were no longer mysteries for them. Lounging upon the pummels of their

saddles, they smiled at the surprise depicted on our features—gazed, I should rather have said, for a chouaf never smiles, it being beneath him to betray the slightest hint of a sensation.

Saïda, whose dromedary had advanced into a line with mine, now leaned over towards me, as if for protection, clinging to my arm with both hands in a manner which she certainly would have avoided under ordinary circumstances. For, while we were absorbed in the contemplation of the extraordinary spectacle displayed before our eyes, another noise, which I can compare to nothing but the rush of many regiments of cavalry galloping along a beaten track, rose above the murmur of fluttering wings.

Distant at first, this noise approached nearer and nearer, increasing gradually in volume, until it rolled just over our heads like a continuous peal of thunder, while the air was suddenly darkened, and the scene around us obscured from our view. At this moment all the pigeons in the roost arose from their nests, until the space overhead was actually alive with birds, mingling together in a perfect chaos of noise and confusion.

And now they swept down upon us like an avalanche, brushing us with their wings, and almost burying us beneath their masses, while we, each of us, seized as many of them as our hands would hold.

Then they vanished almost as suddenly as they came, piercing through the leafy canopy and disappearing amid the uppermost branches.

This astounding scene and stunning roar was caused simply by the return of the female pigeons from their expedition after service-berries, of which they are remarkably fond. They came now to relieve the males from their duty at the nests, while the latter, in their turn, launched themselves into the air, to go forth in search of their morning meal.

We remained for two hours in this city of the feathered

tribes, studying their manners and customs, having gradually regained possession of our faculties, as astonishment gave way to curiosity. And when we at length went upon our way, our departure appeared to cause no greater sensation in the community than was manifested at our coming.

At eight o'clock we came to a halt on the bank of a delicious brook, all shaded with willows and nabacks. We were then upon the edge of the forest, about twelve leagues from Grein and twenty from Doân.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL.—GROTTOES OF THE ANCIENT THAMOUDITES.

Nothing worthy of record occurred during this halt, which I occupied chiefly in writing up my notes, and we were again upon the road by eight o'clock in the evening.

We had now entered a region of gloomy and desolate aspect, broken up everywhere by rocks, ravines, and savage peaks, while a weird vegetation carpeted the hollows or clung to the heights.

Some of these plants trailed along upon the arid soil, while others shot up to a considerable height, presenting the appearance of fluted columns. Others had branches, but of a twisted, shapeless fashion, furnished with thick leaves of clumsy form. All, however, displayed a certain resemblance to one another in shape, color, fruit, and flowers, indicating that they belonged to the same family—that of the cactus.

Here we have a cluster of nopals, and a little further on a plant of equally singular appearance arrests the attention

—a plant with long, thorny branches, bent like bows. This is the agava—the famous *mezcal* of Mexico.

A few acacias and mimosas—true denizens of the desert—grow among the cactus, but nothing else. Nor is there in this tract any graceful object on which the eye may rest with pleasure—any bird-song by which the ear may be soothed.

A great ouaran, or land crocodile, gasps at us from some glade; a lonely owl hoots from the impermeable thicket; the hiss of a serpent is heard from the brambly hollow. These are the only sounds that reveal the existence of life and motion in this vast desert.

Nevertheless, our midnight halt was marked by a slight incident caused by a pack of half-starved jackals, which came prowling around us as we were partaking of a hasty repast of cake and dried dates.

Aaïn-el-Châhin and his four companions gave chase to these caitiff brutes, one of which turned upon his nearest pursuer, and bit him in the thigh. When the man returned to us, halting in his gait, I examined the bite, washing it thoroughly with alkali and touching it with caustic, as a preventive against the possibility of hydrophobia.

This incident had no further consequences; and, at three in the morning, we proceeded upon our route, which now led us through mountains apparently without end. Near their tops heavy vapors rolled among trees of spectral aspect, or clung lazily to the skeleton branches. Below, nature was one ruin. Nothing met the eye but tumbled rocks, covered with a shattered *débris* of others that had fallen on them; tremendous precipices of confused and ghastly forms, at the foot of which immense blocks of stone were heaped promiscuously together, and, far above, similar huge masses, suspended over the abyss, down which they appear ready to thunder at the slightest breath of wind.

As my eye wandered over this scene, my senses became

bewildered, my head swam round in a dizzy whirl, and I was obliged to close my eyes and cling to my saddle, hand and foot, to keep myself from falling off.

Over our heads, beneath our feet, and on every side of us, nothing was to be seen except these tumbled rocks, heaped one upon another in a perfect chaos of confusion. Some of them were bare and sterile, while others displayed traces of a melancholy vegetation, pines and cedars of somber foliage being sparsely scattered on their flanks.

Here was to be seen a peak, the summit of which was lost to view in the clouds: there, a chain of mountains, the rugged line of which loomed against the sky, their abrupt slopes bristling with masses of granite that seemed to have been hurled down there by the gigantic arm of some Titan.

The lion, dread host of these dreary solitudes, walks unchallenged around his vast dominions.

The panther, crouched upon the ledge of rock that overhangs the spring, watches for the wild ox that comes there to slake his thirst.

The antelope springs from rock to rock, seeking for his timorous mate.

The noisome vulture, perched upon the topmost bough of a gigantic pine, whets his beak upon it, in preparation for some horrible banquet: while, high over all, the eagle soars in immeasurable space, seeming, in his audacious flight, to touch the azure vault of heaven.

Such are the mountains of Hadramaut—the Andes of Arabia, the colossal vertebræ of the cradle of the human race.

About seven o'clock, having made twelve leagues from our halting-place on the borders of the forest, we came to a small stream, which we saluted with wild shouts, its pleasant ripple and cool shade promising some compensation both to man and beast, for the fatigue lately suffered by them.

Not far from where we halted, two wretched hovels, in-

habited by Khafir-el-Arianin, displayed their squalid ridges to the light of day, near the entrance of some stupendous caverns, into which the Hadramites are afraid to enter, supposing them to be accursed. Their traditions attribute the excavation of these grottoes to the Thamoudites, or descendants of Thamoud.

"The Thamoudites," says the tradition, "hollowed out immense chambers in the rock, in which they trusted to find shelter from the wind and the rain.

"There they abandoned themselves, fearlessly and without remorse, to their passions, and to the worship of false gods.

"But as the prophet Houd was sent among the Adites, in like manner the prophet Salech was sent to the Thamoudites, with a command from Allah to bring them back to the way of righteousness.*

"He commenced by proving unto them the truth of his mission.

"A rock of granite flew open at his command, and forth from it came a she-camel with young.

"This miracle was performed at the request of the Thamoudites themselves.

"Notwithstanding which it did not convince them.

"For not only did they persist in their idolatry, but they killed the camel, the presence of which was a perpetual reproach to them for their disobedience and obstinacy.

"But the vengeance of Heaven was at hand.

"The earth shook, the mountains were rent, and all the people of the tribe fell dead, with their faces to the ground."

The largest of these caverns is one of the most intricate labyrinths that can possibly be imagined. Even the Khafir-el-Arianin, who are in the habit of visiting it, can with difficulty extricate themselves from its innumerable corridors, most of which terminate in a *cul-de-sac*—among which they

* *Vide* Koran, Chapter VII., XI., and XXVII.

would run imminent risk of losing their way, did they not take all manner of precautions.

It is generally supposed that these caverns extend to a distance of several leagues under the mountains, and that it would take many days to traverse them all.

The entrance, which is about two yards wide, is at the foot of a precipice of one hundred and fifty, or two hundred feet in height. It is low and very dark, and can not be entered without stooping.

The first descent, for some distance, is down a very rapid slope, at the bottom of which the explorer finds himself in an immense chamber with a high, vaulted roof. From thence passages, some of which are tunneled out one above another, lead to other caverns.

Here and there considerable streams of water are met with, the sound caused by the rush of which singularly resembles the chiming of bells.

In one of these vast caverns there is a hole something like the flue of a chimney, through which it is necessary to creep in order to reach another cave, the roof of which is encrusted with stalactites of great size. Further on there are grottoes curiously decorated with architectural devices in the Gothic style.

The floor of these is covered with stalagmites displaying a great variety of character and color. Some of them are of the most dazzling whiteness, while others remind one of the skin of a tiger. Their forms are equally various, some representing masses of drapery, others bearing no inapt resemblance to fruits and pieces of sculpture.

The temperature of these caves is pleasant, and the air pure. So far as concerns their formation, it would seem but natural to attribute it to the filtering of the waters through the rock, and the successive overflows of the streams which gradually found their way beneath it.

Curious to explore thoroughly these mysterious labyrinths,

I took a Khafer-el-Arian (the singular of Khafir-el-Arianin) for my guide, and we entered the caverns with lighted torches.

Having got to the end of one of the grottoes, I tried to retrace my steps to the passage by which I had entered. For some time I proceeded with confidence, in the full persuasion that I was following the identical path by which I had come; but I soon became aware that I was traveling round and round in a circle, which brought me continually back to the same place.

I questioned my guide, upon whose assurance that we were following the right road, I continued to walk on until I recognized a block of soft stone upon which I had carved my name when we had got to the end of the grotto where my exploration terminated. There could now be no further doubt that my guide had lost the path.

I again interrogated him closely, when the alarm evinced by him smote coldly upon my heart. The wretch now ran from side to side of the corridors like one beside himself with terror, while I did all I could to calm him and restore him to reason and memory. But the danger momentarily became greater and greater, for our torches were now nearly burnt out, and these once extinguished, what chance could we have of emerging from the perpetual night that brooded over this fearful place?

Luckily, by dint of going to and fro, I found myself face to face with a great stalagmite from which I had broken off a specimen on account of its dazzling whiteness. Recalling the position in which I stood while thus occupied, I at once obtained a clue to the right path, and, at length, we crept safe and sound out of these gloomy recesses, in which, at one time, I thought we should have found our tomb.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

THIS afternoon I had another adventure.

I thought I caught a glimpse of a horned head, which showed itself but for a moment, and then disappeared behind a hillock. My companions, however, did not believe it was an animal, and, as none of them cared to accompany me, I set out in search of it alone.

I made my way straight toward the spot at which I had descried the object in question, which I at first calculated to be about a quarter of a league distant. It proved to be much further, however—for it is a phenomenon peculiar to these elevated regions that distances are much diminished to the eye, a fact to be attributed, doubtless, to the great rarefaction of the atmosphere.

The hillock from behind which the horns showed themselves ran from east to west, and a portion of the summit of it was fringed with a growth of cactus. The ground rose with a gentle ascent, up which I threaded my way cautiously among the bristling plants, keeping my course right for the place where I supposed my game to be.

Arrived at the top of the hillock I saw, with eager joy, two superb gazelles, a male and a female, browsing tranquilly, as if unconscious of the existence of danger; but, unfortunately, they were far beyond the range of my gun, and I was puzzled how to stalk them, for they were in the middle of a beautiful open plain, destitute of cover behind which I could conceal myself.

I stopped for a moment, turning over in my mind the various stratagems employed by the Hadramites in hunting the gazelle. First I thought of imitating their cries; then of attempting to fascinate them by shaking aloft a piece of

cloth. But such *ruses* appeared to me unlikely to deceive gazelles so cautious as these seemed to be, for I remarked that every now and then they tossed up their beautiful heads, and gazed around them with an air of suspicion.

While I was thus doubtful what course to pursue, my eye fell upon a long, gray line, winding away beyond the plain on which the two animals were feeding.

Whether this was a fissure in the earth, the track made by a troop of wild oxen, or the bed of a stream, I could not decide, but at any rate it was just the cover I wanted, for the gazelles were now hardly a hundred yards from it, and appeared inclined to approach it yet more closely.

Creeping out from the cactus thicket, I made my way for a point at which the hillock was nearly on a level with the flat, upon reaching which, I found myself on the bank of a stream, the shallow, crystal water of which slid along over a bed of sand and clay. The banks of this rivulet were low—hardly three feet above the level of the water, except at certain points where the hillock approached it. I descended into its bed, then, without difficulty, and set to work to wade it up-stream.

As I had foreseen, I soon arrived at a point where the stream, which ran parallel to the plain for some distance, formed a bend and changed its course suddenly.

Here I stopped and reconnoitered, taking care not to discover myself, however. The gazelles were now quite within range of the stream, though not of the part of it where I was resting. They still browsed quietly, in happy unconsciousness of the danger so near them. All was favorable for me, and I continued stalking up the stream—a mode of proceeding, however, which I found any thing but pleasant, for I sank continually in the soft ooze, besides being obliged to creep in a stooping posture, and to guard carefully against making the least noise, lest my game should take the alarm.

But all this was nothing to me, influenced as I was not

only by respect for my reputation as a hunter, but by the desire to procure a good bit of venison for dinner.

Having waded another hundred yards or so, I came to a little covert of worm-wood, the brushy growth of which was high enough to conceal me without intercepting my view. I raised myself up gradually until I could see between the stems, and, finding I was in the right place, sighted the female gazelle just between the horns and fired.

The animal bounded high into the air, and then fell heavily back upon the ground, dead.

I was about to emerge from my ambush and take possession of my game, when I remarked that the male gazelle, instead of taking to flight, as I expected, approached his companion where she lay upon the ground and snuffed around her many times. The poor animal was not more than a hundred yards distant from me, so that I could plainly distinguish the grief and astonishment expressed in his looks. But suddenly the sad truth seemed to flash upon him, and, throwing his head back, he began to utter piercing cries, as he wheeled around the dead body of his companion.

Uncertain what to do next, my first impulse was to shoot the male with my second barrel, but his plaintive cries touched me to the heart, and I renounced for the moment my murderous project. Had I dreamed of encountering a spectacle so sad as this, I certainly should not have left my companions for such an enterprise, and I now deeply regretted that I had undertaken it.

But the harm was done, and I began to think that it would now be a good deed to kill the male gazelle and put an end to his sorrows. Moved by this sentiment of compassion, then, I took aim at him and drew the trigger with a trembling finger, for I was deeply affected.

When the smoke had cleared away I saw the poor little

buck lying upon the ground dead, with his head resting on the body of his dead companion.

Flinging my gun upon my shoulder I made a movement to ascend from the bed of the stream, but, to my great surprise, I was held fast by the feet, my legs being clasped closely round as if by the jaws of a vice. I made a violent effort to free myself from this singular restraint, but without success. A second and more powerful struggle was attended by no better result; and, in a third attempt, I lost my balance and fell backward with my head in the water, from which I raised myself with great difficulty, and not without a narrow escape from drowning.

I now felt my feet locked down more closely than ever, while I continued to make frantic efforts to extricate myself, but all in vain, for I could neither move my legs backward nor forward, to the right nor to the left, in addition to which I began to be aware that I was sensibly, though gradually sinking.

The fearful truth now dawned upon me. I was in a quick-sand.

A shudder of horror vibrated through my frame; but I continued my efforts to release myself with all the energy of desperation, dragging myself first to this side, then to the other, and twisting my knees round in their sockets; but all to no purpose. My feet remained fixed to the soil, in which they had become firmly embedded.

The sand, as it heaped around me, seized hold upon my leathern leggings, squeezing them so closely that I found it impossible to withdraw my legs from them, and I now saw no other prospect before me than that of being engulfed, slowly but surely, as if sucked down into the vitals of the earth by some invisible monster.

This fearful idea smote me with a cold shiver, and I cried aloud with all the power of my lungs.

But who was there to hear me? For a league around,

probably, all was a savage solitude, untrodden by the foot of man.

I now leaned forward as far as my constrained position would permit, striving, with the nervous clutchings of despair, to dig away the sand—but I could do little more than scratch the surface of it, and the little I was able to remove, besides, was immediately replaced.

At length it occurred to me that, by driving my gun horizontally into the bank of the stream, I might obtain a resistance by which to wrench myself from destruction; but I had dropped it in my fall, and it had already disappeared beneath the sand. Then I thought of throwing myself on my back, so as to retard the process of sinking, but the water around me was at least two feet deep, so that I must infallibly have been drowned had I done so.

All hope had now abandoned me. I could devise no means of escape, and I was utterly incapable of making any further efforts. Stupor took complete possession of me, my very thoughts appearing to have become paralyzed. I only knew that I must die, and at one moment, in fact, death had laid his hand upon me. But I recovered my senses after an interval, and made an effort to shake off the torpor by which I was weighed down, so as to meet my fate manfully.

As I raised my head, my eyes fell upon the two last victims of my cruelty, lying dead upon the meadow, and my heart ran cold at the sight, for I felt that my mishap was a visitation from Heaven. Contrite and repentant, I then turned my looks on high, trembling lest I should behold there some token of the divine anger, which I had thus drawn down upon my head; but the sun was shining out with his daily splendor, nor was there a single cloud visible upon the vaulted azure.

And now, my eyes earnestly fixed upon Heaven, I prayed with a humility and fervor hardly to be imagined unless by those who have, at some time or another, found them-

selves in a situation as hopeless as mine was at that moment.

While thus gazing upward, my thoughts were interrupted by an object that met my view. It was a large vulture, sailing in the upper air. From the height where he soared, while yet far beyond the range of human eye, he had, doubtless, watched the fall of the two gazelles, and was now stooping down to secure his share of the banquet which death had spread for him. Soon another of these birds sailed into the circle of my view, and yet another, until the dark forms of a large flight of them stood out from the deep blue of the sky.

Describing wide circles in their descent, they gradually approached the earth, until the foremost of them alighted at some distance from me, glanced around for a moment with inquiring eyes, and then hastened eagerly toward the prey by which he was attracted. In a few minutes the meadow was literally black with these hideous birds, many of which crowded upon the bodies of the two gazelles, to tear out the eyes of which seemed to be the first object of one and all of them, while they manifested, by the flapping of their wings, the ravenous delight with which they gorged themselves at the banquet.

Then came a pack of meager, half-starved jackals, sneaking with coward stealth among the spiky leaves of the cactus. Between them and the vultures a savage conflict now took place, which ended in the defeat of the latter, when the victors threw themselves greedily upon the prey, over which they fought and wrangled with bitter snarling and snapping of teeth.

At length they stole away. Now, blessed be Allah!—at least I shall not perish by the cruel teeth and talons of such pestilent creatures!

A feeling of comfort came upon me when this disgusting scene was past. I cast a last, lingering look at the objects around me; the crystal water and the bright, beautiful

glories of nature, from which I was about to sink for ever. Then, once more turning my eyes and thoughts toward Heaven, I awaited, with calm resignation, the moment when it should please the Almighty to release my spirit—but, notwithstanding my efforts to maintain this tranquil condition, the memories that crowded upon me again dragged me down to the depths of despair.

I thought of the years that were gone; friends and relatives appeared to rise up before me, and then my tears began to flow.

At this moment a sound of human voices seemed to come to me from afar. A flash of hope lightened over me, and I called aloud with all my remaining strength, while my heart leaped with frantic joy. The voices came nearer and nearer, until they rang out loud and distinct, and then I saw Aaïn-el-Châhin and Selim coming toward me over the meadow.

They had heard my two shots, and, wondering at my long delay, had set out in search of me. Nor were they a moment too soon—for I was sinking surely and steadily, the swallowing quicksands having already absorbed me to the hips.

The moment Selim perceived my situation, he unrolled his turban and threw one end of it to me, which I seized with eager grasp, and, twisting it into my girdle, fastened it with a triple knot. Then, with a trembling anxiety which I will not attempt to describe, I gave the signal to commence pulling.

The cord strained and tightened as my two followers drew me towards them with gentle but steady force. I felt myself moving gradually upward; and now—O joy beyond expression!—I am drawn beyond the grasp of the devouring quicksand—saved!

Bending to and fro the joints of my stiffened limbs I shouted with joy; and then, bounding up from the bed of

the rivulet, embraced my two rescuers in a wild transport of gratitude.

We searched for my gun, which fortunately was as yet but partially embedded in the sand, so that we recovered it without difficulty. As for my leggings, I left them behind, having no desire to tempt again the terrible grasp by which I had been deprived of them.

It was sunset when we reached the camp, where I was obliged, in the first place, to relate my adventure to the wondering circle. I then changed my damaged garments: and, dinner over, we again took to the road—this time under the conduct of a guide, for the first part of our next stage was reported to be of a most intricate and difficult character.

CHAPTER XLV.

OUR GUIDE.—SCHIBÂM.—A NARROW ESCAPE.

Soon after starting upon our journey this evening, we found ourselves defiling through a narrow valley, among thickets of yellow-flowering cactus, asclepias, mimosas, and mossouacks.

Herdsmen of wild aspect roam amid the dusky vegetation of these mountains, the recesses of which re-echo their discordant cries. Birds' nests, of spherical form, rock from the boughs of the mossouacks, like the cradles in which the women of some tribes of the western hemisphere entomb their dead infants.

We soon emerged from the valley, and, having crossed a small sandy plain tufted with a few withered mimosas, passed through several other gorges, until we came to one walled with high mountains cast in one solid block of primitive rock, debouching from the end of which we saw before us

a wide plain, surrounded by high ridges of similar formation. This plain, which was circular in form, and dotted here and there with dusty mimosas, presented a most gloomy and desolate aspect. Now and then we caught glimpses of startled gazelles, coursing away toward the mountain ridges with lightning speed.

About ten o'clock thick darkness began to spread around us, enveloping, as with a black mantle, mountain and plain, and blotting out all the details of the landscape. There was moon enough to have lightened us upon our way, had not her disk been utterly concealed by a cloud as dense and black as one of the mountain rocks ; but many stars glittered in other spaces of the firmament, their collective brilliancy supplying us with a substitute for that withheld from us by the queen of night, and contrasting strangely with the profound obscurity of the great mass of black vapor that sat like an island upon the ocean of heaven.

The mountains to the southwest were no longer visible, while those more to the south, toward which our route lay, loomed in the distance, like great shadowy forms of darkness shrouded in a thin mist. Their compact masses, indented like ramparts, shut out from us the mysterious pass through which we were to emerge from their fastnesses, while the unvarying character of the plain traversed by us, added to the darkness, embarrassed our guide so much that he could with difficulty distinguish the road.

Before long this man, who was a Khafer-el-Arian, confessed to us that he had lost the way. It was as if we were in mid-ocean and had lost our compass.

"This accursed black cloud," said he, when upbraided by Aaïn-el-Châhin, "has been sent hither by Satan, to bewilder me ; but I swear to you, upon my beard, and by the head of my father, that my hesitation is caused by no evil design."

"What care I for that?" retorted Aaïn-el-Châhin ; "recover the track within five minutes, or else you shall not

only lose the five abû-mathfas you were to have had for your services, but your head into the bargain. You acknowledge that these were our conditions?"

"I acknowlege it," replied the guide—"but let me push on to reconnoiter. I will return as soon as I have satisfied myself that I have found the track."

"Not without us upon your heels," said Aaïn-el-Châhin; "small chance we should have of seeing you again!"

We wandered about at hazard for some time until at length, to my great relief, I heard the guide say to Aaïn-el-Châhin, who stuck close to him,

"You see that line of mountains, there, with their tops running in a line as straight as the djerid* of a lance? Well, that depression of the line, behind which you can see some stars lower down than those on either side of them, is the gap through which our right road leads."

Shortly after, we entered a valley thick with mimosas, among which many paths were traced; and soon the fall of some of our animals indicated that we had arrived at a water-course, which the darkness of the night prevented us from distinguishing. It proved to be a dry channel, and we halted in it about one o'clock.

Here some porcupine quills, scattered about upon the ground, guided us to a hole in the sand, which the chouafs enlarged with their swords, to come at the animal within. By and by a deep, smothered grunting, accompanied by the peculiar sound made by an irritated porcupine in bristling up its quills, put the diggers upon their guard, and the animal suddenly bolted out through the sand and made for some bushes—before it reached which, however, its career was cut short by a slash from a saber. This porcupine weighed nearly twenty-five pounds.

* *Djerid* signifies a lance. It also means the branch of a palm-tree; and is, besides, the name of the most important province of Tunis, where these trees grow in great quantities, their produce forming the principal resource of the country.

The Hadramites, unlike most of the Asiatic Arabs, have no objection to either the porcupine or the hedgehog as an article of food, as is also the case with the *Hascheechia* or hemp-smokers of French Africa. They cook them either as a *ragoût*, in which case they first skin them, or bury them, with skin and quills on, under a brasier, the skin coming off readily when they are quite baked.

At dawn of day we dismissed our guide, who was now of no further use to us, and proceeded on our way, arriving, about nine o'clock, within view of Schibâm, which is enshrined in a labyrinth of far-reaching mountains, at a distance of forty-six leagues from Doân.

We found a guard on duty at the gates of the town, consisting of some five-and-twenty or thirty ragged soldiers of picturesque appearance, the chief of whom advanced toward us to reconnoiter. Doubtful, notwithstanding the passport given to me by Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, that we came from Doân, and, above all from Mareb, to which no European, with the exception of Arnaud and myself, had ever penetrated, this man ordered a dozen of his men-at-arms to conduct us to the Nagib, who, as he informed us, had instructed him not to allow any stranger to enter Schibâm without bringing him into his presence.

In accordance with this order, we were marched off toward the citadel, moving in single file between two ranks of sinister-looking soldiers.

Seeing us thus led away, the populace, urged on by a miserable santon, supposed us to be some malefactors to whom certain fires that had occurred in the town within the last month or two had been traced, and set upon us, accordingly, threatening us with violence and death. To threats, action soon succeeded; and, in a moment, a tempest of stones and mud hurtled through the air, accompanied by savage yells and imprecations—and we should, probably, have been torn to pieces but for the exertions made by our escort.

Thus we arrived at the first court-yard of the citadel, bruised, and battered, and hooted after, and defiled with dirt. Here we were at length safe from the hounding of the fiendish pack, who, however, thronged with threatening gestures around the gate, in hopes, doubtless, of witnessing our immediate execution.

When we were brought into the presence of the Nagib, who, from his lofty terrace, had seen all that passed, I did not suffer my coolness to desert me—for I was confident of getting happily out of this scrape, as I had, already, out of so many others. Nor was I deceived; for Seid-Galip, the Nagib, a fine-looking old man between sixty and seventy years of age, and of hale appearance for his years, judging from my appearance that I could not be one such as our assailants had taken me for, dismissed the escort at once, and politely inviting me to be seated, requested me to state whence I came, whither I was going, and what had brought me to Hadramaut—on all which subjects I straightway enlightened him.

Satisfied with my explanations, he ordered a cup of coffee to be brought to me, in token of friendship; and then, addressing the mob, commanded them to retire, telling them that I was a true and sincere Muṣṣulman, that, as such, he had taken me under his protection, and that he would make it a personal matter should the slightest injury be done to myself or my followers. Then, summoning two of his slaves, he ordered them to conduct us to an apartment, into which others carried our baggage.

Here we changed our soiled garments, after which breakfast was served up. But I could hardly touch a morsel; and, throwing myself upon a couch, I soon fell into a deep sleep, overwhelmed as I was by the three successive adventures so lately encountered by me.

CHAPTER XLVI

DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—THE NAGIB SEÏD-GALIP.—THE ARAB
AND THE EUROPEAN.—BUONABARDI.

I DID not awake from the torpor into which I had fallen until the following day, at about five o'clock in the morning.

When I came to myself I felt as one does when delivered from the spell of a frightful nightmare. Around me stood my people weeping, and several of the Nagib's slaves, all of whom, the moment I moved and spoke, ran away as fast as their legs would carry them; for they had looked upon me as dead, and were thus watching over me, murmuring the prayers for the departed while arrangements were making for my funeral. Hence their terror.

For some time I could not explain the matter to them, nor induce them to return, for I was still much prostrated. My head felt as if hollow; and I could not collect my thoughts, the past having gone so completely from my memory that I had no idea where I was, and what had brought me there. At length Selim made bold to return to me; but he had much ado before he could bring me to myself, and to a clear comprehension of the unpleasant events by which our entry into Schibâm had been attended.

Seïd-Galip had been informed of my death, and, subsequently, of my resurrection. Less fanatical than his people, and having some faith in magnetic influence, he at once attributed my lethargic sleep of nearly twenty hours to the excitement to which I had been subjected the day before—but, although he tried to persuade his servants and the rest of my followers to return to me, not one of them would venture until he came to see me himself. Then they prevailed upon themselves to reënter the chamber where I lay,

crowding around my couch and emulating one another in bestowing all manner of attentions on me.

Thanks to these cares—not forgetting to give due credit to my medicine-chest—I was soon up and about; and at sunset I went to visit the Nagib, whom I found alone upon his terrace. He was in a merry mood, laughing heartily as he alluded to the panic caused by me among his servants. But as I could not view the matter altogether in the light of a joke, I complained of the insults suffered by us from the populace, and demanded the punishment of the santon by whom they were set upon us.

“Be it so, then,” said the Nagib; “for I would not tolerate such an outrage if committed even on the vilest of men. Nevertheless, you Europeans are tender of heart and patient under obloquy, after the example of your Prophet, Jesus the son of Mary, who, in the book which he brought to you from on high, commands you, when smitten on one cheek to turn the other to him who hath smitten you. In our book, also, we are instructed to pass over without blame the actions of the insane, of infants, and of those under the influence of sleep. Now, the man who offended you is insane, and can not be held responsible for his actions, and by pardoning him you will not only prove your magnanimity but shall receive your reward from the All-merciful. If you insist on the man being punished, however, it shall be done; for, with the help of Allah, neither injustice nor violence shall go unredressed in my dominions.”

This appeal to my clemency was so direct that I had no alternative but to pardon the fanatic to whose violence we had so nearly fallen victims. There was policy in so doing besides—for it would have been distasteful to the Nagib to have ordered the punishment of one of a class privileged among the Mussulmans on the score of sanctity and divine inspiration. We know how the ancients regarded lunatics and persons influenced by frenzy as under the special pro-

tection of the gods—a belief upon which was based the celebrity of the pagan oracles. These ideas are maintained to the fullest extent by the Mussulmans, among whom it is safer to insult a chief than a santon.

Hence the care taken by them of their insane; and the principle is even extended to infants while yet too young to exercise the reasoning faculty, at which period their parents carefully abstain from correcting them. We have a proverb which says, "Truth is found in the mouths of infants and fools;" but the Mussulman goes further than we do, and acts on the principle of respect toward them.

"But," asked I of the Nagib, after I had agreed to let the santon off, "why were we made prisoners on our arrival here and marched up under escort?"

"Because," replied he, "many European travelers, particularly Englishmen, adopting Mussulman names and costume, imitating our usages and speaking our language perfectly, have thrust themselves, from time to time, into my dominions, studying our ways, writing about and drawing us, rooting among our antiquities, and trying to patch us up with bits of that civilization to which they attach so much importance in Europe, but which would only have the effect of corrupting our manners and destroying our independence. To prevent such things from again taking place, therefore, I have issued orders for the arrest of every foreigner, in order that he may be examined before me, dismissed if proved friendly, and beheaded if otherwise."

This may appear to some a rather severe course, but it was one quite natural, all circumstances considered; for Orientalism and Europeanism are antagonistic elements, and that to an extent admitting of no concessions.

It is curious to reflect, indeed, upon the singular contrasts existing between the Arab and the European.

"Ah!" cries M. Alexandre Dumas, somewhere in his "*Vélocé*," "if some travelers in the East had only taken the pains with the narratives of their travels that I take with

this of mine, what trouble, what research would they not have spared me !”

Which means, perhaps, that M. Alexandre Dumas might then have helped himself with facility to whatever he considered useful to him in said narratives, saying, with Molière :

“Je prends mon bien où je le trouve.”

May it not be assumed as granted, then, that the renowned romancer in question will take it in good part if others deal with him as he would with others? This admitted, he can not take it amiss if I take the liberty of quoting him, as follows, on the subject of the contrasts before alluded to :

“Mahomet promises to his followers a paradise altogether sensual : Jesus, to His, a paradise altogether immaterial.

“The European can marry but one wife, and makes all kinds of laws against adultery. The Arab may take four wives, in addition to as many concubines as his means will allow him to maintain.

“The women of Europe walk out much, and with their faces uncovered : the Arab women are kept close prisoners in their houses, and if they do leave them are obliged to go veiled.

“The Arab, if any trouble arises in his domestic affairs, uses the rod liberally ; the European who strikes a woman is disgraced.

“The more wives an Arab possesses the wealthier he is : one wife is often enough to ruin a European.

“The Arab marries as young as he can : the European postpones matrimony as long as possible.

“The first thing a European does when he meets a friend is to inquire after his wife ; to ask an Arab about his wife is one of the greatest insults you can offer him.

“The European drinks wine : the Arab is forbidden to use it.

“The European wears close-fitting garments : those of the Arab are loose.

“Among Europeans it is a maxim that the feet should be

kept warm and the head cool: the Arab maintains that the head should be kept warm and the feet cool.

“The European salutes by taking off his hat: the Arab by patting his turban down upon his head.

“The European is cheerful in his deportment: the Arab grave.

“The European keeps the door of his house shut: the Arab leaves the curtain of his tent open.

“The European uses a fork in eating: the Arab uses his fingers.

“The European drinks often during his meals: the Arab drinks only when his meal is over.

“The European speaks familiarly to his parents, and evinces toward them, generally, more love than respect: the Arab must neither sit down, nor smoke, nor speak before his father; nay, even before his elder brother.

“The European loves traveling for amusement: the Arab never travels except on business.

“The European always knows his age: the Arab can seldom tell his.

“It is a point of honor with the European not to give way a single step in battle: the Arab can take to flight without disgrace.

“Painting is an art in Europe—a sin in Arabia.

“The European is continually fretting: the Arab takes every thing quietly.

“The European believes in a Providence: the Arab is a fatalist.”

It was eleven o'clock before I took leave of the Nagib, after a long and interesting conversation, which turned, among other subjects, upon *Buonabardi*—Bonaparte—for here, in the East, the martyr of St. Helena is always “the giant a hundred cubits high.”

On returning to my lodging, I found my people abandoning themselves to balmy sleep—an example which I was not slow to follow.

CHAPTER XLVII.

KACIM.—BAKR-EL-HOUD.—VISIT TO A SICK MAN.—SCHIBÂM.

I WAS still sound asleep when the sad, monotonous cry of the muezzin, who, perched upon a minaret near the citadel, was calling the people to morning prayer, awoke me about break of day.

Hardly had I arisen when a slave belonging to the Nagib entered my chamber, and requested me to follow him to his master, a summons which brought with it a momentary suspicion that Seïd-Galip might have backed out of his good intentions toward me and was going to treat me to an evil turn. Fortunately it was not so, however, for, on my presenting myself to him, he said that he merely wanted me to accompany him on a visit to a sick brother, in order that I might determine the nature of the disease under which he was suffering, and whether a cure was possible.

With this view we were to go to a large town called Kacim, seven leagues from Schibâm, situated on the borders of a lake abounding in fish*—an immense extinct volcano. This lake is no other than the famous Bahr-el-Houd, in the neighborhood of which Ptolemy places the source of the Styx—*Stygis aquæ fons*—that bottomless gulf, up from which sounds of lamentation and pestilent vapors ever arise; and the Arabs of the present day believe it to be the first stage of souls on their way to eternal fire.

Descending into the first court-yard, we mounted our dromedaries, and, followed at a short distance by a dozen of the chiefs and guards, we sped through the streets of the

* Some of these fish—carp, tench, pike, etc., etc.—grow to a size of fifty, sixty, and even eighty pounds. The Kacimites do not use them for food, supposing them—as the Doânites do the cranes and storks—to be men in a metamorphosed state.

town at the best pace of our swift animals, to the great surprise of the people, who, two days previously, wanted to tear me to pieces, and who, having heard of the trance into which I had fallen, could hardly believe their eyes that they again saw me alive before them.

Having cleared the town, we defiled along a narrow path, traversing with great speed, for about an hour and a half, a country of the most charming and picturesque character, until we reached a kind of fortress, flanked by four towers, and situated nearly in the center of the town of Kacim.

Here we dismounted, and, leaving our escort in the vestibule, mounted up some steps into a small chamber, where I saw, stretched upon a common pallet, and attended by two or three servants, a man somewhat advanced in years, whose expression denoted much suffering.

This was the brother of Seïd-Galip. I approached him, and saw at a glance that his malady was past cure, for he was evidently in the last stage of a liver complaint. To please my host, however, as well as to assuage the pain of the sufferer, I made up some medicine for him on the spot, giving him also a prescription for some others which are usually prescribed in similar cases.

By eight o'clock we had returned to the citadel, from which I forwarded a further supply of medicines to the sick man—after which, accompanied by Selim and Aaïn-el-Châhin, I walked out to explore the oasis and observe its inhabitants.

Of the several States composing the great Hadramite confederation, Schibâm is, next to Terim, the most important. It is about forty leagues square, and comprises, besides the chief town, about fifty minor towns and villages, some situated upon the slopes of the hills, others in the valleys, and all surrounded by pleasant gardens and well-tilled fields.

The population of the oasis, including that of the town of Schibâm, is from thirty to thirty-five thousand.

The town of Schibâm—the *Sabota* of Pliny, and *Sabbatha* of Arrian—is delightfully situated, intersected, as it is, by umbrageous gardens, and surrounded by rich pasture lands, over which roam troops of noble camels, herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep and goats. It reminds one, in fact, of Doân, but on a larger scale.

Like the latter town, it is defended by a high and thick rampart, flanked at intervals by square towers, and commanded by a large citadel, comprising the residence of the Nagib, barracks for the guard, many splendid gardens, a formidable arsenal, and several deeply excavated casemates, which latter serve as a refuge in case of siege, and are said to contain a large amount of treasure. As at Doân, the streets are wide and well kept, some of them vaulted over, and others trellised.

There are some fine old ruins to be seen here, covered with Himyratic inscriptions; a great many mosques surmounted by minarets wrought with arabesques, and surrounded by schools and asylums; beautiful fountains, immense caravansaries, public baths, and shops in great variety.

The town contains fifteen hundred *dîar*, or houses, consisting of a ground floor only, eight hundred *alias*, houses of one or more stories, and five hundred and fifty *eschés*, or dwellings of the lower class.

Giving to each of these habitations an average of four occupants, which is a low computation, we thus have a population of eleven thousand four hundred souls, the addition to which of the fluctuating population of about six hundred, lodged in the caravansaries, gives us a total of twelve thousand. Of this about a fourth is composed of Jews, Mouëllets, Banians, and Sabians.

Here, as at Sana, and, indeed, in all the towns of this part of Arabia, the revenues are leased, for the most part,

by Banians and Jews, nearly all of whom are merchants, carrying on their business in formidable competition with the native traders.

The Jews have two synagogues at Schibâm, and twelve rabbis, under the command of a chief, or grand rabbi. Their day of rest—called *sabt* in the Arabic, whence our word *Sabbath*—commences, as among the Mussulmans, at sunset, lasting until sunset on the following day. During the interval no work can be done, on which account the night-lamps are lighted before sunset, and the fires made up for Saturday, large pieces of charcoal being placed in the ashes at the bottom of the furnaces, to keep them lighting. The viands to be eaten on the morrow are placed there at the same time; and if the cooking does not go on prosperously by itself, the parties interested call into requisition the services of some Mussulman boy to forward their preparations—but they are forbidden to pay him until after sunset, for they must neither give nor receive money on the Sabbath.

Neither can they carry a light, nor smoke, nor travel on that day: and so scrupulous are they with regard to it, that many of them will not even venture out of doors, lest haply they might break the Sabbath by striking a stone with the foot and sending it along the road. And if, by some mischance, the dwelling of a Jew happens to take fire on a Saturday, no Jew can lend a hand to extinguish the flames, round which the sufferers go lamenting, while the Mussulmans look on and laugh their superstition to scorn. It is even related of a Jewish mother, that she allowed her child to perish in the fire, into which it had fallen before her eyes, and where she left it while she ran to seek from others the assistance which her conscience would not permit her to give on the Sabbath day.

Weddings are conducted with great pomp among the Jews of Schibâm. Some days before the ceremony, the future bride paints her face with red and white, and has her

hands and feet tattooed in yellow, with henna. In the domestic arrangements after marriage, it is the usage for the father and the elder boys to take their meals together, while the mother, the daughters, and the younger children have theirs separately.

On the death of a Jew or Jewess, the nearest relations of the deceased, or else some professional mourners, occupy the chamber of death until the funeral, lamenting with the wildest demonstrations of despair and grief, while they tear themselves with their nails, and pluck their hair out by the roots.

The people of Schibâm, like those of Doân, are industrious, and devote themselves much to commerce. Caravans are employed by them in transporting to Mareb, Sana, Aden, the country of Mahara, and Muscat, the productions of their country, manufactured as well as in a raw state. Blankets of wool and of camel's hair, foutas, sommadas, abbayes, mantles, mats curiously plaited, articles of saddlery, vessels and bags of palm-leaf, pottery of elegant design, gums, maize, millet, wheat, henna, and plants used in medicine, cornelians, amethysts, and onyx.

The stones above mentioned abound yet in some of the mountain districts. In their rough state they appear to possess little or no brilliancy, and can be recognized only by persons accustomed to search for them: but, when wrought and polished, their beauty and value become apparent.

Generally speaking, the Mussulman women of Schibâm are remarkably fair, slender, and graceful in figure, and very precocious, marrying at from ten to fifteen years of age, and sometimes earlier. Their costume consists chiefly of a large mantle of blue, red or white stuff, folded double, confined about the shoulders by a clasp and about the waist by a leathern girdle. The clasps worn by them—called *khelal*—are of silver, and in the form of long skewers with rings.

Women here seldom veil their features—a remark which applies generally to all this part of Arabia. They wear their hair in great tresses falling down on the back and shoulders. Their head-dress consists of a turban, kept in its place by a cord of camel's hair, and over that a veil which floats over the shoulders and bosom, and encircles the face without concealing it. They also wear finger-rings, and bracelets upon the wrists and ankles, these ornaments being usually of silver. Their necklaces are of coral, and they tattoo the hands and arms.

For toilet purposes they pulverize the leaves and flowers of the myrtle, and dust their tresses with the odoriferous powder. This plant, which is also used medicinally, grows wild upon the mountains, and furnishes a branch of industry to many camel-drivers, who gather it upon the spot, and carry it with them to Mareb or some other remote district to which caravans travel.

Saffron, incense, benzoin, mastic, and cloves also figure upon the toilet, in pomades, to make which they are reduced to powder and mixed with oil. For a depilatory they boil powdered orpiment and lime in soap and water, stirring it with a spatula until it assumes the consistence of a paste, by the application of which superfluous hairs are removed in five minutes, as completely as if shaved off with a razor. I have tested this compound successfully, by applying it to the back of my hand.

All the women here tinge their eyelids black with koh'ol. This substance, to which I have so often alluded, is nothing but gâlena, or sulphuret of lead, reduced to powder and kept in a tube of glass or wood, or in a reed. Into this a pointed slip of wood is dipped, and then passed along under the eyelids with singular dexterity.

Henna (*Lawsonia inermis*, Linn.) is cultivated in all Mussulman countries where water abounds. Its leaves are highly prized for the coloring matter contained in them, which is used not only for the dyeing of stuffs, but also, as

already mentioned, by the women for tattooing in yellow their hands and feet. The elder women use it also for tinging their silvering tresses, and the men sometimes to conceal the grizzling of their beards. It is also supposed to render the hair silky—for which purpose the leaves, slightly moistened, are placed upon the head, which is afterwards washed with clear water. For tinting the hands and feet it is used in the form of a paste, made of the leaves pulverized and mixed with water, and kept in contact with the skin for a considerable time. With this paste the Arabs and Hadramites of rank also stain the legs and tails of their white horses and dromedaries. Henna is also used in medicine, applications of it being sometimes found successful in the treatment of cutaneous diseases, inflammations, and tumors.

At five o'clock we returned to the citadel. The night passed tranquilly away, and when morning came I strolled about in the gardens by which our lodging was surrounded until breakfast, after which I went to say farewell to the Nagib, for we were to take our departure in the evening.

My host and I talked together until three o'clock, like old friends; and, on parting, I presented him with a handsome pair of percussion pistols, which seemed to have taken his fancy during our ride the day before, when I wore them in my belt.

Soon after I returned to my lodgings, slaves came bearing provisions for my journey and several gifts from the Nagib, consisting of articles manufactured in the country, and a purse containing two hundred silver dollars.

Just after sunset we rode forth from the town, accompanied, on this occasion, by the good wishes of the population, who tried thus to indemnify us for the strange reception we met with on our arrival among them.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LOST AGAIN.—AN UNEXPECTED APPARITION.—BANDITTI.—
“SPLENDID BEEF!”

ARRIVED at the end of the valley in which Schibâm is situated, we turned to look at the town, which was now half veiled in the dusk of the brief tropical twilight—that halting-place between day and night, in which the light and heat of the one melt into the mystery and dewy freshness of the other. The light was fading fast, and soon there was nothing visible of the second city of Hadramaut but its slender minarets, which loomed in the falling gloom like the masts of ships at anchor.

Our path again led through the heart of a mountain region. Tired of the jog-trot pace of our little caravan, I pushed onward in advance of it with Selim, and having gone some distance we pulled up to wait for the rest of our company; but, after waiting for some time without seeing them, it occurred to us that we had lost our way. I desired Selim to mount to the top of a neighboring peak, from which he might be able to descry our people, but he soon returned, saying that he could see nothing of them.

There was no time to be lost. We remounted our dromedaries and endeavored to retrace our steps, but the night was fast closing around us, and we soon became confused in a labyrinth of tall shrubs which formed a thick brushwood on the sandy soil, when suddenly we saw the light of some camp-fires, and Selim shouted joyously that we had found our caravan. It proved to be a douar, however, from which we procured a guide to assist us in recovering our road.

It was not long before he recognized the traces of our chouafs, saying, “I know the tracks of your camels by

their being deeper than those of ours; I could follow them all the way to Terim, without once losing the line."

He proved to be right, and in less than two hours we rejoined our companions, who were beginning to be somewhat uneasy about us.

Toward midnight we began to ascend a steep, rocky path, to the right of which rushed a torrent of muddy water. Suddenly Aaïn-el-Châhin, who was a little in advance of us, stopped, pointing to a turn in the path above us, on looking in which direction I saw two young lions, lively and graceful as cats, playing with one another in the middle of the road.

"It is a pretty sight at a distance," said the cautious chouaf, "but at close quarters one of them would cut a man down with a blow of his paw."

He had hardly spoken when the bang of a matchlock rang among the rocks, and one of the lion-whelps, bounding into the air, fell back near the edge of the ravine, over which it staggered and came rolling nearly to our feet, dead. The other lion, collecting himself for a spring, bounded with astonishing agility up the rocks from among which the shot had come.

I gave the word to my companions to prime their matchlocks, for I had a presentiment that we should be challenged before long—nor was I mistaken, for at that moment a commanding voice hailed us with, "Min ho?"—(who goes there?)

"Mesaferin!" (travelers) replied I, at random.

A discharge of matchlocks up among the rocks now announced the death of the second lion; and just then the advanced file of a company of armed men appeared at the spot where the two lions were sporting but a few minutes ago.

These comers, who were on foot, were, for the most part, tall, robust men, with complexions of a deep bronze, like the personages who figure in the Egyptian sculptures.

They wore a kind of uniform—a blue fouta, white abbaye, and yellow sommada—and they were all armed to the teeth. When within fifty paces the chief leveled his match-lock at me, but I looked at him without winking.

“Are you Hadramites?” demanded he, in indifferent Arabic.

“We are strangers,” replied I; on which the bandit dropped the muzzle of his gun and advanced toward us, saying, “Give me a hundred abû-mathfas and I will let you pursue your journey.”

There was no use in attempting to resist the appeal, for the bandits were thirty against nine. With the best grace I could, then, and glad to get rid of them at the price, I counted down into the hand of the robber the sum demanded by him, which he examined, piece by piece, to see whether they were in good condition. Among them he objected to about a dozen, which he considered defective and refused to take, although I disputed the matter with him, and I was obliged to exchange others for them.

This matter negotiated, he gave the word to his band, and they marched away between the files in which we respectfully ranged ourselves to give them passage—their uniform, which had such an imposing effect at a distance, proving, on a nearer inspection, to be nothing but a patch-work of rags. They soon disappeared from our view in the mountain gorges, and we saw no more of them.

The carcasses of the two young lions, despoiled of their skins, lay in the middle of the road.

“If the sidis would like to rest themselves at my house,” said a soft voice, which seemed to proceed from a thicket of dwarf palm-trees beyond the ravine, “it will cost them but a trifle, and I can insure them a good repast, for I have just bought a quarter of splendid fresh beef from a passing tribe.”

A quarter of splendid fresh beef! Picture to yourself, reader, the effect upon us of these simple words, *broiled*

meat!—the exuberant hilarity with which we, half-starved travelers, accepted the cheerful suggestion!

We made our way incontinently across the ravine, to join our inviter, who directed us to go to his house, hard by, saying that he would follow us immediately.

This house of his turned out to be a disgusting hovel, filthy, and reeking with smoke. The proprietor arrived there nearly as soon as we did, carrying beneath his abbaye some object which we could not clearly distinguish; and addressing us as we sat in a circle near the door of the hut, with our camels behind us, requested us to make ourselves at home. He then dived into the burrow which appeared to serve him for a parlor, dormitory, and kitchen, from which there soon came to us the fragrant odor of a broil.

"Who are those men encountered by us just now?" inquired I of our host.

"They are *Hharamie* (pirates) from the desert of Mahara," replied he, in the richest Hadramite accent. "Last year they took away my wife from me, poor thing! She was a great expense to me, to be sure."

"But the desert of Mahara is a long way from here," said I.

"They have long legs," rejoined he. "I have just been asking them about my poor Hafza, and a heavy charge she was to me! Her new husband is that big black fellow to whom you paid the hundred abû-mathfas. He tells me that he will bring her back to me when she breaks down. Do you call that fair, now?"

At length he came forth from his den with five or six large cuts of broiled meat on a wooden platter, which he set down in the center of our circle, saying, "Eat, Sidsi, eat away, and fear nothing!"—availing ourselves of which invitation, we made a vigorous attack upon the nomad beef.

Now, my teeth are by no means defective; and as for my companions, they were, one and all, capable of masticating leather, notwithstanding which our efforts to make any im-

pression on this meat were eminently unsuccessful. I remarked that our host kept watching us from the corner of his eye, while he talked without ceasing.

"What sort of meat *is* this?" at length cried Aaïn-el-Châhin, in despair. The rest of us had already given up all attempts at eating it.

"Beef," replied our host, blandly—"splendid beef: it may be slightly tough, perhaps, because the nights hereabouts have been cold lately."

As we all rose up, I threw a silver dollar at the feet of the miscreant, telling him that if his beef were to be paid for according to its value, he should have been treated to a sound thrashing instead.

"Allah be good to us!" he exclaimed, as he pocketed the money, "who should have thought, now, that their excellencies could have found fault with such splendid beef!"

Not choosing to argue the matter with him, we remounted our dromedaries and rode away, when, at a turn in the path, we came upon the carcass of the second lion killed by the bandits, from the flanks of which I perceived, in the morning light, that two long strips of flesh had been cut.

"Splendid beef!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

ZAOUÏET-SIDI-AMR.

ABOUT seven o'clock we dismounted in the court-yard of a caravansary situated at the entrance of a small village of some three hundred inhabitants, celebrated for its *Zaouïa*,*

* This is the name given by the Arabs to a *marabout*, a sort of small temple erected to the memory of some holy man of great reputation, in

and called, from the name of its founder, Zaouïet-Sidi-Amr. We had now made eight leagues and a half since leaving Schibâm, which brought us exactly half way between that place and Terim.

Hardly had we established ourselves here, when people discovered, through Mohammed, that I practiced medicine; and, in a short time, I was surrounded by a perfect swarm of the lame, the blind, the paralytic, the deaf, and the dumb, who came to consult me—while the young girls besought me to furnish them with love charms.

I did my best to satisfy all; and then, to get rid of them, I went on foot, with Selim and Aaïn-el-Châhin, to visit the Zaouïa, which is situated half a league to the west of the village, on the summit of a very steep mountain.

Sidi-Amr, according to Aaïn-el-Châhin, was a famous taleb, who dwelt here about one hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago, and whose writings were in great renown all through Hadramaut and even as far as Sana, from whence the holiest of the Sheiks and Imams used to come to consult him. His decisions upon the most subtle and difficult questions in law, morals, and religion were always accepted without appeal, and they are yet standards among all the Mussulmans of the east, west, north, and south.

We soon reached the foot of the mountain on which the tomb of the taleb is situated. Near the structure, which is always kept freshly white-washed, there projects an enormous rock known as *Nala-el-Omm*, or The Mother's Curse.

When about a third of the way up the ascent, we came to a kind of circular platform of gray marble, polished as perfectly as if by a skilled artisan, and which is an object of great veneration among the Hadramite pilgrims, he who can clear it at one jump being looked upon as blessed by Allah.

which hospitality is extended to all comers, whether Christian or Mohammedan, and even to criminals, who, the place being inviolably sacred, find in it a safe refuge.

Having passed this, we entered a small grove of mossou-acks and other trees, which seemed to bow their heads, respectfully, toward the holy sepulcher.

Upon this sacred summit, to which as the pilgrim ascends his heart beats with respect and awe, the air is cool even at the warmest season of the year.

As we approached the Zaouïa, we were assailed by an importunate band of juvenile saints, children of the *Oukils*, or descendants of the taleb, who are the hereditary guardians of the remains of their common ancestor. We had taken care to provide ourselves, at the caravansary, with biscuits and cakes for the propitiation of this noisy swarm; and while the urchins were wrangling with each other for these, we passed through them into the sanctuary, where we stopped for a while, to perform our devotions and visit the *mukkaden*, or elder of the place, to whom every Mus-sulman, whether tourist or pilgrim, is bound to offer a gift in proportion to his means.

After this, accompanied by two Oukils as guides, we climbed up by steps cut in the rock to a cavern, the entrance to which is so low that the children, even, cannot creep into it without going on their hands and knees. We had but a glimpse of a large cavity hollowed into the rock at the end of the cavern, and vaulted overhead—for our guides held us back, telling us that the *graven images* must be seen only from a distance.

They thus term the nude figures of a man and woman sculptured in bas-relief upon the rock in this cavity, about four feet from the ground, one of them holding a sphere, while before the other a half-coiled serpent lifts its head. The guides take care to impress upon credulous visitors that these figures are real personages petrified, and kept in that condition by the power of the taleb.

Quitting the cavern, we bent our steps to the famous rock called The Mother's Curse, in which there is a narrow fissure, which descends perpendicularly until it widens into

a fathomless abyss. Inside this fissure, a ledge some inches wide has been cut along one of the sides, on which the devotee bold enough to hazard the dangerous ordeal plants his feet, having his back braced up against the opposite wall of the rock ; so that he is, as it were, suspended over the dark abyss, as he works himself along with cautious movement. The principal difficulties are found at the extremity of the fissure, where the sides of it approach one another so closely that it is no easy matter to squeeze between them.

The pilgrim who thus works his way, safely, from end to end of the fissure, is supposed to have obtained the grace for determining to live in good-will with his neighbors for the future. But if an incorrigibly quarrelsome man puts himself to the test, the rock, we were told, closes upon him, and he is kept prisoner until the Oukils, by means of certain mystic words and invocations of the name of Allah, cause the fissure to re-open and allow him to return to the point from which he started.

Having seen Nala-el-Omm, we were satisfied with our expedition and returned to the caravansary by four o'clock—from whence we again set forth on our journey at sunset, followed, as at Schibâm, by the prayers of the people.

CHAPTER L.

FROM ZAOUÏET-SIDI-AMR TO TERIM.

It was the evening of Sunday, the seventeenth of September, 1844, as we entered upon this, our twenty-sixth stage, our way still winding through a wilderness of mountains.

We had again secured the services of a guide—a half-naked Khafr-el-Arian, with a white beard. His gun, which

was inlaid with copper, had originally been a matchlock, from which condition it had gone through a round of successive alterations, until it rested in its present form of a flint lock. In another century, possibly, one of his descendants may improve it into a percussion.

Our progress was slow and difficult. Sometimes the route followed paths that were barely visible—again it led us across ridges bristling with myrtles, arbutus, and lentisks, into the thickets of which we disappeared with our dromedaries.

To the right and left of us lay great masses of granite, striped with black vertical lines.

Here and there fires twinkled, and there came to us, at intervals, from the distance, cries resembling the calls of human beings.

The fires were those of some small douars invisible by day, being completely enshrouded in the thickets through which we were advancing, and in which these mountains are clad as if with fur. The cries were the yells of panthers, hyenas, and jackals.

For three hours the route maintained the same character. But at length our dromedaries paused, and we perceived that we were about to ascend a very steep mountain covered with stones, which rendered the path so difficult for the animals that we dismounted and prepared to climb up it on foot. We soon attained the summit, the profile of which cut out very sharply against a deep blue sky spangled with stars.

The descent from this peak, steep at first, became easier as we proceeded, until it sloped down to a great valley teeming with vegetable life, and intersected in every direction by innumerable brooklets that came down from the mountains with a pleasant murmuring sound.

Thus it is in these torrid zones, in which water—not sunshine as in our countries—is the vivifying principle, giving verdure to the tree, life to the dumb animal, and joy to man.

Wherever a river flows, a brook tinkles, or a spring wells up, life teems all around in its highest luxuriance.

Arrived at the foot of the slope, we halted near a grove of nabacks in full bearing—the *zizyphus lotus* of Desfontaines—and here dismissing our guide we abandoned ourselves to a brief snatch of repose.

The place where we camped was then a wilderness, but Aaïn-el-Châhin called my attention to the ruins of a fort situated upon an eminence, which, he informed me, formerly held a prominent place in the history of the Islam, but is now the abode of djinns and sorcerers, who descend from it at times to torture and bewitch the human race.

It was half-past one when we resumed our journey—just the moment of the brief struggle between departing night and coming day. The great valley at the head of which we halted, spreading away its cultivated area before us until lost to the eye, glowed with some mysterious light, which gave it the semblance of a lake of silver studded with emeralds, and set in a framework of black mountains.

On one side of us the mountain peaks broke forth, here and there, at the touch of the first glow of morning, while on the other we had a distant glimpse of Terim, yet sleeping behind its verdant screen of foliage. Red fires twinkled sparsely in the valley, and the last stars of night were yet palpitating in the sky, when all at once a rosy mist gathered over us, moving from east to west, and tinting the whole vale with a hue of sweet color and wondrous transparency.

Through the glow of this luminous haze villages dawned upon us, and even the isolated huts and tents that were scattered over the valley. And now the rays of the yet invisible orb of day shot up from behind the chain of mountains to our left, the glow gradually increasing in intensity until the radiant pencils of light were absorbed by the great globe of fire, and at this instant Terim emerged from the shadow in which it was sleeping, its gray outline appearing distinctly above the green mass of foliage.

And the vale warmed up gradually in the rosy light, the tint fading away over the darker masses into a sulphury yellow, until it merged on the deepest shadows into a cold metallic gleam.

We were now within about three leagues of Terim, according as we approached which the country became more thickly settled, indicating our approach to an important town. Couriers passed us on donkeys, giving us a word of news as they galloped by. Mounted soldiers patrolled the road and reconnoitered the valley, and crowds of people toiled past on their way to market.

And strange-looking market people they were, calculated to impress a European merchant with curious ideas on the subject of Hadramite commerce.

One, for instance, who was a dealer in charcoal, carried in his hands three or four lumps of that commodity.

Another, who traded in bricks, bore some fifteen or twenty specimens of that article on his shoulder.

Here came a dealer in poultry, with a hen under his arm, and a brace of pigeons hanging at his back, while he drove before him with a stick a goose, or perchance a guinea fowl.

Another urged on a wretched little donkey, laden with various fruits.

There was not one among these dealers who could reckon upon a return of more than three francs on his produce, while some did not appear to have more than five or six sous worth of merchandise with them—and yet they came from distances of three and four leagues around, bringing all their families along, wives, children, and aged relations.

The women, garbed after a fashion reminiscent of Scripture history, led their children by the hands, or carried them upon their backs.

The old men, with grand white beards, looked like ancient patriarchs on their way to some modern Jerusalem,

as they tottered along with the assistance of sticks, or rode by upon mules.

There was something superbly picturesque in this ragged, tattered procession. No dictator, robed in purple, and entering the eternal city in his triumphal car, on his way to the capitol, could have held up his head with more dignity than these fellows, as they strode past, clad in little else than the simple djebba; for among the Arabs dignity resides in the man himself—not in the rank to which he belongs, nor yet in the clothes worn by him.

The Arab, in fact, is individually a Sultan in his own family, as much as Abdul-Medjid is in Constantinople. His wants are few, and his ambition is fully satisfied when he has obtained money enough at the market town, in exchange for his charcoal, bricks, garden stuff, or poultry, to maintain himself and his family until the next market day.

We soon passed by these straggling wayfarers, not one of whom condescended to notice us even with a passing look—and at five o'clock we arrived at Terim, the gates of which were yet closed. But Hadramite hospitality has taken care to provide for caravans, which usually travel by night, and outside the gate of every walled town there stands a caravansary, destined for the accommodation of the belated traveler.

In the court-yard of this hostelry, then, we dismounted, and, as I intended leaving Terim in the evening, we made ourselves up to remain here for the day.

Soon after our arrival the gates were opened, and I took a hasty walk throughout the city, of which my description must be but slight—for I was thoroughly weary of *terra firma*, and anxious to reach Mokallâh, where I meant to embark on the Indian Ocean for Oman and Muscat.

CHAPTER LI.

TERIM.—FINES AND PENALTIES.—THE NAGIB SHEIK-NASSER.—AN-
ECDOTE.—MEDICAL PRACTICE IN THE EAST.—DEPARTURE FROM
TERIM.

TERIM—the *Tarim* of Edrissi, a famous Arabian writer—is the capital of the Hadramite confederation.

This important town, which lies sixty-five leagues east by southeast from Mareb, contains from eighteen to twenty thousand inhabitants, and the oasis in which it is situated from seventy to eighty thousand. The majority of this population is Mussulman—the rest being made up of Mouëllets, Banians, and Jews, as usual in this country.

The aspect of Terim is at once strange and picturesque—the dark tint of the rocks that tower above it contrasting in a striking manner with the whiteness of the houses, which cover a considerable space of ground, being, for the most part, surrounded by gardens. The domes of the mosques, the slender minarets, the numerous terraces, the squares, the wide, handsome streets, the ramparts, flanked at intervals by towers, the ruins, covered with inscriptions—all these are attractive and pleasing to the eye.

The four principal gates are—Bab-Schibâm, Bab-Aïnâd, Bab-Mokallâh, and Bab-Seywum, so called from the towns toward which they face. Six lesser gates give access to the gardens and groves outside the walls, which are plentifully supplied with springs of water.

A rivulet from one of these springs follows its natural course to the town walls, where it falls into a large reservoir, from which water is conveyed to all parts of the town.

In addition to a dozen large squares, in which traders usually meet for business purposes, each of the leading streets of Terim is devoted to the display of some special

class of merchandise. In one, for instance, are to be found the dealers in butter, oil, and butchers' meat; in another the manufacturers of shoes and saddlery, while others are occupied respectively by dealers in silken and woolen fabrics, tobacconists, restaurateurs, fruiterers, jewelers, and other traders and artisans—each street taking its designation from the particular class to which it is devoted.

This ingenious division affords great facility to strangers for the transaction of business, which is kept tolerably lively here between imports and exports, purchase and barter of articles of necessity and luxury, produce from the Arabian Gulf, from Sana, Mareb, the Indian Ocean, and Muscat, which are continually brought in either by single travelers or by caravans.

The manufacturing industry of Terim is represented by many trades. By jewelers, for example—chiefly Jews and Banians—who make rings of gold and silver, bracelets, anklets, and other articles of *bijouterie*. By leather-workers, lapidaries, manufacturers of silk and cotton stuffs and gold and silver tissues, of woolen and camel's hair fabrics, of sommadas, abbayes, blankets, mantles, and sundry other such useful matters. In many of these manufactures—such as the tissues—women, without distinction of creed, are extensively employed.

Arms are also manufactured here—blade-weapons as well as guns and pistols. But the potters particularly excel as artisans, some of their mosaics especially being of remarkable beauty and finish. The pottery made by these people stands fire perfectly, so much so that kettles are made of it; and its toughness is well tested in such forms as bullet-moulds and mortars for grinding paint in.

The dyers of Terim make use of a kind of red earth and a substance called *rounat*—which is, in fact, opopanax—both of which ingredients abound in Hadramaut. They also use Brazil wood, which comes by way of Persia, Japan wood, and indigo from the East Indies—as well as lapis

lazuli, the gum and bark of various trees, nuts, pomegranates, and the juice of the citron. For fixing their colors they employ lime, salt, and alum.

These latter ingredients are also used by the tanners in the preparation of the hides of donkeys, oxen, camels, sheep, goats, and beasts of the chase—gall-nuts being substituted by them for tan.

Upon an eminence nearly in the center of the town stand two strongly-built citadels, one of which is the residence of the Nagib, Sheik-Nasser, the other comprising the arsenal and state prison. The latter also contains several compartments, in which many of the inhabitants keep in safes, under the protection of a permanent guard, their money and valuables, to provide against an attack from independent nomads. To this division there is but one gate, which is called *Kasbah*.

I need not describe the residence of the Nagib, as it is exactly similar to that at Schibâm.

These citadels are flanked by massive bastions defended by formidable batteries, the guns of which are served by Turkish and Egyptian artillerymen—deserters for the most part, but looked upon with great admiration by Sheik-Nasser.

As at Mareb, Kousen, and all the important places of Hadramaut hitherto described, this potentate is sole lord and master of his capital and the oasis of which his extensive principality is composed. Fines are imposed and levied by him, and punishments awarded, according to a scale.

An assassin, for instance, is obliged to pay blood-money to the family of his victim, or else to lose his head.

A thief is bastinadoed in proportion to the extent of his larceny—a repetition of which is visited upon him by cutting off one of his hands. If he is found to be incorrigible, his head comes off.

Robbery perpetrated by force of arms is visited with the

severest punishment. The tops of two young trees a brought together and tied with cords, the criminal being then firmly bound by a leg to each, which done the cords are cut, and the hapless wretch is torn in two by the force with which the trees fly asunder, his remains being left suspended to them as a warning.

In cases of maiming with a sharp instrument, deputes one of his councilors to determine the size of the wound and fix the amount of damages payable by the perpetrator to his victim. This matter is ascertained by means of an instrument called the *giass-el-demm*, a gauge, graduated to a very close scale, with which the wound is measured, the compensation being regulated according to the degrees of the scale.

Calls to arms, conditions of peace, and all affairs of national interest, are regulated by the Nagib and his councilors, who also attend to the maintenance of civil order, and provide for the wants of the caravans by levying for them an annual fifth upon the harvests of the wealthy.

When I returned to the caravansary I was immediately beset, as at Zaouïet-Sidi-Amr, with a host of invalid male and female, of whom I did not get rid until the siesta came. Hardly had I abandoned myself to repose in this well-kept hostelry, when a soldier Nagib aroused me from my slumber, and desired me to proceed straight with him to his master, on whom he had avoided calling, in hopes of passing through Terim without him. But I had reckoned, as they say, without the owner, for Sheik-Nasser had been aware of my arrival at his place since an early hour in the morning.

Following the messenger to the citadel, then, I was conducted by him into a large apartment built in the fortification, at the further end of which, reclining upon a divan of crimson velvet, I saw a handsome old man of remarkably sage and venerable aspect. Sheik-Nasser was he—having dismissed my guide, rose up from the

and advanced toward me with a cordial greeting, inquiring particularly about my health, and giving me a hearty welcome to his dominions. Nor could I avoid being much struck with the courtly manner in which he received me, and with the elegance of his language.

Having seated me by his side, and after the usual inter-
conventionalities, the Nagib said :

"The rumor has made me aware of your skill as a
physician—will you exert it in favor of one of my children,
who is ill with the small-pox?"

"Signifying my readiness to do my best for the pa-
tient," Nagib clapped his hands, and desired a slave who
was at the summons to bring little Khaled to us. The
slave went out, and quickly returned bearing in his arms a
boy three or four years old, wrapped in a cashmere shawl.
Nagib examined the little sufferer and ascertained that
the disease was in its second stage, I turned to the Nagib,
and asked him how many children he had.

"Ten living," replied he—"seven boys and three girls."

"Any of them grown up?"

"The girls are married. One of my sons is fifteen—this
is the youngest child. The others are of inter-
mediate ages between the two. I have had forty-five chil-
dren, but they are all dead now, with the exception of these

He asked me
and I replied
saying, "What did they die?"
He replied, "Of the small-pox."

"There is no time to lose then—let the other six boys be
brought to me at once, in order that I may vaccinate them,
unless you prefer to see them die of the disease."

"And without vaccination you can not undertake to save

"Which on my replying that I could not, Sheik-Nasser
was silent for a moment, and then said,
"I will open what may, Hadji, you shall not vaccinate them.
I rather lose them all than submit them to the prac-

tice of that infernal art invented by Europeans, and which, after all, could afford no manner of protection to them if it is written above that they are to die. Allah alone is great, and I resign myself to His will."

"As you please, Sidi," rejoined I; "vaccination is the only chance for them; but as you object to it, no more can be said on the subject." And then, not wishing to bereave him of all hope, I prescribed some simple treatment for the sick child.

I have related the above as an example of the ideas of the Arabs with regard to medical practice, a subject on which it is impossible to disabuse them of their prejudices. They refer all diseases to these four classes—hot, cold, wet, and dry. If a malady is traced by them to damp, they administer dry remedies—if to heat, cold ones, and so on, and beyond this you can not get them to go. For so completely are they enslaved by habit, that, even when inviting the assistance of foreign physicians, they refuse to follow their directions when in opposition to their own theories.

It is thus also with the Persians and Turks, who, even when travel has brought them into contact with European civilization, continually fall back upon their own countries no more enlightened than when they left them—in connection with which I will here relate an anecdote which I believe to be new.

A Turk, of grave and phlegmatic aspect, went to an opera ball at Paris, where he looked on in wonder as to what it could all be about. At the last dance especially, when the bow of Strauss conjured up a band of frantic whirlers, he was greatly puzzled, no explanation seeming competent to enlighten him on the subject.

Shortly after, this same Turk was present at a mass on Ash Wednesday, at Notre Dame—a ceremony which to a good Mussulman like him was yet more incomprehensible than the dancing at the *bal de l'Opéra*.

Having passed the winter at Paris, our Turk returned to

the East, leaving after him at his hotel some papers containing remarks upon his travels, among which was to be found the following memorandum :

“At certain seasons of the year the French become insane, but cure themselves by placing a small quantity of ashes on their heads.”

As regards Oriental surgery, it seems to go no further than bleeding, application of plasters, use of the cupping-glass, reduction of a dislocation, and lancing an external abscess.

My mission with Sheik-Nasser being now accomplished, I took leave of him and returned to the caravansary, to which presently came two of his negroes with provisions and gifts for me—“in return for the trouble I had taken in going to the citadel to give medical advice.”

After the evening repast, the dromedaries were again loaded, and, leaving the caravansary, we made a *détour* round the town, so as to avoid the crowds of people going to the mosques, whither they were now summoned by the *ezan*, or call to prayer. Our way now lay right for the sea-port town of Mokallâh, from which we were twenty-nine leagues distant, and which was to be my last halting place in Hadramaut.

CHAPTER LII.

FROM TERIM ONWARD.—GENUINE HOSPITALITY.

THE day of our departure from Terim had been an intensely hot one, presaging badly for the night. Nor had we been more than an hour on the march when a violent blast of wind came up from the west, driving along overhead a great whirl of black clouds charged with electricity and rain.

In a moment the air was impregnated by a whirling eddy of fine sand, which drifted into our eyes, causing intense pain; and then the tempest burst upon us, loud and awful.

It seemed as if all the clouds of Hadramaut had come together to take leave of me as I was about departing from the country, and were doing their utmost in the way of a salute. To add to our discomfiture, too, the bad condition of the road prevented us from traveling faster than a walk; and in a few minutes we were saturated like so many filters, the rain coming in at the necks of our abbayes and running out at our heels.

The road, along the sides of which we made our way in two single files, was as spongy as a bog, while around us roared torrents and cascades, rushing furiously down from the mountains between which the route led. The fell aspect of these great black masses, which seemed almost to touch the arch of heaven—the thick vapors that hung upon them—the foaming waters, that arose and broke in the air with a fearful sound, menacing us with instant death—all this filled us with inexpressible awe. Even our camels, children of the desert, and more accustomed than their masters to the paroxysms of this wild nature, came to a stand-still with terror—while we were so chilled with cold and wet that we had neither the strength nor the heart to urge them on.

At length, about ten o'clock, the hurricane relaxed its fury, the rain ceased to fall, and the air became again serene. The moon and stars, too, now shone forth in the heavens, and once more we moved forward on our journey.

Arrived at a grove of palm-trees, beneath which were a few tents belonging to nomad herdsmen, we dismounted, and, having made a good fire, dried our garments by it, stretching ourselves out upon the sand—the soft couch provided by Providence almost every where in Arabia for weary travelers. Behind us our dromedaries contentedly chewed the cud of yesterday's fodder, while Aaïn-el-Châhin

and his chouafs regaled themselves joyfully on the fruit of the trees at the feet of which we lay.

I admit that I would at that moment have preferred to find myself reposing beneath an oak, a beech, or an elm; for in the perfumes of the trees that grow by the hedge-rows of the fields where we have played in our childhood there is a magnetic spell that carries us back to the scenes of home. Once more we imagine ourselves surrounded by the companions of our early sports. We run with them across the meadows, climb the mountain side, or loiter by the well-remembered river.

And so the palm-tree was not then the tree for me. Yet many a time now when I see its fruits displayed for sale on the Boulevards of Paris, or its branches exhibited in some collection of the productions of Algiers, I am transported in imagination back to that wild Arab nature. I feel that I have wronged the palm-tree, and I humbly ask its pardon.

At midnight, cheerful and in a merry mood, we continued our journey, the road, which was much easier than for some time past, running through the middle of an extensive plain, rich in flocks of superb sheep and goats. The numerous paths of which this road consisted were well trodden, indicating that they were much traveled. Here and there lay great blocks of granite, brought hither by the floods—time-worn stones, hoary with the mold of age.

Having crossed this plain, we came to the mountains of Djebel-Kharrâh, which are the loftiest of the peninsula, running along the coast of the Indian Ocean to Muscat, where they ramify with the chain of Djebel-Akhdar, already referred to.

Some of the peaks of this range attain a height of more than eight thousand feet above the level of the sea; and on these, as on some of the mountains of the interior, snow remains for many weeks at a time. In reference to this, Edrissi tells us that ice used to be found in summer on the heights near Tayéf or Taïffa, in the Hedjaz; and Scheddad, the

father of the renowned Antar, has celebrated in a poem the mare ridden by him on the battle-field, one verse of which runs thus :

“Let them know that in times of dearth I share my repast with her, and that I cover her with my mantle when it freezes.”

We entered these mountains by a gorge as narrow as the fissure of a cavern. As we advanced, the wind began to blow, spinning away the fog before it up among the mountain heights into threads like flashes of gossamer, and revealing to us the forms of gigantic tamarind-trees festooned with purple creepers—beetling rocks, the watch-towers of the osprey and vulture, and deep ravines, edged with grotesque blocks of granite, which, with the scathed and twisted trunks of trees standing out from their crevices, and entwined with dead creepers, looked like the skeletons of some huge megatheria of the olden time.

And amid all this mysterious, awful nature there moaned a plaintive wind, the wails of which seemed to be mingled with the howls of the savage denizens of these somber hollows, benumbing both man and beast, in spite of the exertions demanded by the ascent.

By and by the two vast walls between which we traveled appeared to open gradually. The horizon extended its line, and the mountain descended abruptly toward a small hamlet, shady with groves and orchards, and surrounded by cultivated fields.

To our left a thick coppice of dwarf cypresses grew upon a sloping bank, giving it from a distance the appearance of a vineyard—while to our right the mountain shot up into a peak, its rocky flanks covered with a close carpet of wind-withered vegetation, on the yellow ground of which the winter-rocket whitened out here and there with its dazzling clusters.

We had now reached the summit level of the gorge, and, perceiving at some little distance before us a spot sheltered

from the wind by some high rocks, we bent our steps toward it in order to let our dromedaries have a few minutes' rest. Then, following the course of a brook, we took on foot the road to the hamlet, which, amid its tangle of sweet verdure, seemed to invite us to repose.

This tangle of verdure was composed of superb mangoes and papaws, banyan, cocoa and fig-trees, Indian chestnuts and pistachio lentisks, which intermingled their rich foliage with that of the *arou* or smaller lentisk. Around all these were enwreathed vines of great size, looping their festoons in wild confusion from tree to tree, and filling the air with the delightful perfume peculiar to those creepers.

Here, too, upon the crests of the ravines, was to be seen the cedar-leaved juniper, while the slopes were dotted with the sweet-flowering Spanish broom—whose poor relation, the common broom, showed its head here and there, wavering to and fro in the breeze like a drunken man. The thorny spartium, too, was here—captious and quarrelsome, laying hold of our garments as we passed, and lacerating them and our legs with reckless cruelty.

By the margin of the brook the rose-laurel sported its coquettish flower, amid tall, slender reeds. Here languishing solanæe consorted with the sprightly hawthorn, and yonder the bladder-nut tree showed off its green and yellow livery upon the gray rocks.

Notwithstanding the chill air, so difficult was the descent of this mountain that the perspiration ran in streams from our brows; but our feet soon pressed the rich mold of the valley, at the entrance of which we found a very large, stone-built well.

By this reservoir there stood three young Bedouin damsels and a negress, who drew up to gaze at us as we passed. We approached them and asked for a drink, which they proffered to us in vessels woven from the leaves of the dwarf-palm. What a primitive people this! the group before us was a true picture from the patriarchal life of old,

full of the mysterious charm that always lights up the living realization of things described thousands of years since, and which we are accustomed to consider as past and gone with the times that knew them.

We entered the hamlet, and stopped in front of a large caravansary made of reeds, around which stood a great number of small buildings, most of them occupied by merchants. The interior of the caravansary was designed with elegant simplicity, trunks of palm-trees forming the columns by which the roof was sustained. Beside the door there stood a coffee-shop, opposite to which barbers plied their trade—and, as usual, there was a large court-yard for the accommodation of the beasts of burden.

Some of the buildings intended for the use of merchants being unoccupied, we took possession of one, where we had hardly established ourselves when the sheik of the place came to visit us, attended by slaves carrying a ready-prepared repast which we were not slow in dispatching, having eaten little or nothing since our departure from Terim, which we had already left fourteen leagues behind us. And, when evening came, our supper was brought to us in like manner—carried this time, however, by a son and daughter of the sheik.

The young man, whose name was Khacem, was about sixteen years of age—his face of that expressive type to be seen nowhere except in Arabia. Hamida, his sister, some two years younger, and apparently of mixed race, was of radiant beauty, and endowed with a form of admirable grace and elegance. Her eyes were tinged with the darkness of darkest night, and there was an indefinable charm in the manner with which she did the honors of the repast, which consisted of milk served up in two ways—sugared and curdled—chickens and ducks swimming in sauce, and a tremendous pillau as a *plat de résistance*.

These disposed of, I presented Hamida with one of those small looking-glasses which Arab women hang round their

necks, and her brother with a handsome dagger of European make—trifles which they received with unspeakable satisfaction, and immediately proceeded to decorate themselves with them.

I stayed with these young people, chatting, smoking and drinking coffee until eight o'clock, when Aaïn-el-Châhin announced to me that it was time to be moving—upon which I took a kind farewell of our hosts, and we again headed our dromedaries towards Mokallâh.

CHAPTER LIII.

A NIGHT-ATTACK.—MOKALLÂH.

ON emerging from the valley at the foot of which the hamlet is situated, we found ourselves again traversing an arid, mountainous region, from which we soon entered a large plain, tufted with mimosas and other thorny trees.

This locality is notorious for the number of assassinations that have been perpetrated near it—and it is but seldom a caravan passes through it without having an exchange of shots with the bandits by whom it is infested. Of this we had been forewarned, however, and consequently we were upon our guard.

The path was clearly defined, but so narrow that we could travel only in single file—our dromedaries splashing here and there, through large pools of water, the result of the storm of the day before.

According as we advanced, night thickened around us, and we heard in the distance the growl of the panther, mingled with the wail of the hyena and the shrill yelps of jackals bound to some horrible banquet. Here and there

stone-cairns could be discovered, indicating places of burial—sepulchres continually increasing in size, for each passer by considers it a sacred duty to cast a stone upon them.

Although our dromedaries were *hedjins*—that is of the swift race—they could not here travel faster than a walk—for the hedjin requires not only a clear space before him, but also on either side, to enable him to put forth his best pace.

Now and then we became aware of an addition to our caravan. Men on mules or dromedaries made their appearance suddenly among us, without our knowing from whence they came, followed the same road with us for a few minutes, exchanged a word or two with our guides, and then disappeared as mysteriously as they had come.

These men were evidently scouts, but we could make no objection to their presence, which they might readily have accounted for. Aaïn-el-Châhin, however—a young fellow as brave as he was intelligent, and well accustomed to this kind of proceeding—warned us to keep a sharp look-out and see to our primings; a recommendation especially addressed to our chouafs, who, being armed with matchlocks, have their matches* to light up besides.

When this precaution had been taken, he rode alongside of me and said: “Watch over the caravan, Hadji, while I push on to reconnoiter—for the delil tells me that we are approaching a pass where, to all appearance, our way may be disputed.”

I objected to his thus going forward in advance without any support; but he only said that, circumstanced as we were, our best course was to let such marauders as might be prowling around see that, notwithstanding our small number,

* These matches, plaited with five or six plies, are made from the bark of a tree indigenous to the country, which, after some preparation, becomes as inflammable as our tinder. They are twenty or thirty yards long, and the Arabs wind them around their heads over the sommada, after the fashion of a turban.

we were not afraid of them—and then, urging his hedjin to full speed, he disappeared into the night.

Soon after, we heard a shot, quickly followed by another. Aaïn-el-Châhin had evidently been fired on and had returned the compliment. In the night time—and particularly if the traveler happens to be situated in a *cul-de-sac* of the desert—the sound of fire-arms always ring an echo in his heart. We mended our pace, then, until we came to a cross-road, where we discerned, through the surrounding gloom, Aaïn-el-Châhin defending himself against seven or eight brigands mounted upon swift dromedaries. He was on foot, and on the sand beside him lay a dead robber, already stripped of his clothing.

The brigands immediately dispersed and fled, as we bore down upon them at full gallop, sending some shots after them into the darkness: but it was a chance if we hit any of them, for we fired at shadows rather than men. Pursuit would have been worse than useless—it would have been dangerous: for these men had the advantage over us of knowing the ground, which, aided by the darkness, would have enabled them to entrap us into an ambushade.

We collected our force, then—and, leaving the dead robber where he lay, proceeded on our route.

With the exception of a slight lance wound on his forehead, Aaïn-el-Châhin—who had now remounted his dromedary—was unhurt. We learned from him that, on his reaching the cross-road where we came up with him, he was set upon by the brigands, one of whom fired at and missed him—while he, with a return shot, brought his adversary to the ground. The others then fell upon him, and he must have yielded to numbers but for our timely arrival.

Beyond the plain we came to a little dingle over-grown with mulberries, pomegranates, citrons, oranges, almonds, palms, and stunted pistachios, interlaced with the vanilla, which shed its perfume all around. Then we had more mountain, bleached and sterile, and rising in the form of a

bulged cone, the center of which presented a sort of broad ledge upon which a few nomad tents were grouped, our approach to them being announced from afar by the barking of dogs.

It was about midnight as we dismounted at this spot, and huddled ourselves, all benumbed as we were, round a great fire.

About two in the morning we again proceeded on our way, and by daybreak found ourselves in a cultivated district of diversified ground—a district where several harvests are gathered in the course of the year, where the poppy, the saffron, pimento, tobacco, sugar-cane, maize, hemp, aniseseed, madder and indigo, grow in the same fields with melons, radishes, carrots, onions, beans, and sweet potatoes, all overshadowed by superb caroubes, walnut, almond, and palm-trees.

This landscape was relieved by groups of white cabins, flocks of sheep and goats, herds of camels, and old, ruined castles. Here and there we sprang partridges, while bustards and hares of small size fled away at our approach, followed sometimes by a pack of jackals in full cry.

About seven o'clock we halted for breakfast at a solitary caravansary, situated on the bank of a half-dry water-course. And here, according to custom, hospitality was proffered to us by the sheik of the place—an exigency affecting the life of a sheep and a dozen chickens.

Continuing our route from this place, the country became more and more picturesque, populous, and cheerful. Its inhabitants were good-looking, and seemingly happy. Beautiful young girls, gazelle-eyed and bright with smiles, came toward us, offering milk. Peasants were tracing furrows with ploughs of the same old pattern as those used in the time of the patriarch Abraham. It seemed as though we had entered one of those fabulous countries devised by the poets, to which there are no gates for the entrance of sin and death.

We soon got out of the mountain region, and approached a sandy tract stretching away to the sea, where it forms a beautiful bay, on one side of which Lafca is situated, and on the other Mokallâh.

These two places, properly speaking, comprise one and the same town, separated from each other by the harbor. The houses of Lafca are mostly constructed of reeds, and occupied by a transitory population—sailors and such like. Those of Mokallâh are of stone, and the population is a permanent one.

Caravans of mules and camels, diminished to our eyes by distance to the proportions of good-sized ants, were threading their way toward the town, which, over the far-stretching sands, appeared to us like a confused chalky mass. But, as we approached it, details began to develop themselves, until it appeared to us in its true aspect. Just as we reached it the muezzins were calling the faithful to second morning prayer—their voices, full, sonorous, and commanding, vibrating toward us from the minarets.

In consequence of its being the fast of the Ramadan, the harbor was nearly deserted. Two or three small English and American vessels only were to be seen, and a few fishing-boats waiting for the end of the fast, which over, they could again put to sea. Ordinarily, the harbor of Mokallâh swarms with Arab and Persian fishing-boats, with craft from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, from India and from Zanzibar, on the east coast of Africa, put in for repairs, for water and provisions, or with a view to trade.

The anchorage of this harbor, sounding about four fathoms, is excellent, and well sheltered from the southeast wind.

We entered the town by a narrow, uneven street, the white-washed houses along which were fitted with *moucharabies*, or *jalousies*. As we wended our way along we heard a strange sound, which increased as we advanced,

until it resembled the hum of innumerable bees, or the croaking of an army of frogs. Approaching the building from which the buzz proceeded, I peeped through the door, and discovered a Hadramite school of the most primitive and simple constitution—a school containing neither tables, nor benches, nor paper, nor any other elements of a school, in fact, except the primary ones of master and scholars.

The pedagogue was seated cross-legged on the floor, with his back against the wall. He was provided with a long switch, with which he could easily reach the remotest of the scholars, who were squatted before him in a semi-circle, each of them telling off verses of the Koran upon a string of beads—a study to which, indeed, their education is strictly limited, and according to their proficiency in which they are looked upon as graduates in letters.

He, for instance, who has committed to memory fifty verses of the sacred book, is entitled to rank as a bachelor of arts. The man who can repeat a hundred is a licentiate, and the possessor of one hundred and fifty, a *taleb*—a distinction equivalent, perhaps, to that of doctor, or *savant*.

Traversing this street, we had yet to pass through five or six others of similar character before we reached the caravansary at which we were to rest. On our way thither we observed several men of grave aspect walking slowly along—men without a vestige of clothing except a waist-cloth, and wearing a kind of bonnet on the head. These were Banians.

Here again were to be seen *Yafas*, or Bedouins of the country, leaning like stony statues against the wall, regardless of the scorching sun, which, albeit the month was September, and we were in the neighborhood of a mountain region, shone down fiercely upon us, keeping the thermometer at a high range.

Now and then I observed a large niche excavated in the

outer walls of the houses, within which reclined in state a personage wrapped in an abbaye or in a shawl of white muslin with colored stripes and fringe—stately persons, in general, who gazed at us with imperturbable gravity as we passed.

About one o'clock we arrived at the caravansary—and here terminated my journey through Hadramaut.

CHAPTER LIV.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.—SAINTE-CROIX-PAJOT.

WE had hardly installed ourselves in the caravansary when Selim announced a visitor—and one whom I little expected to meet here.

This was a man called Hadji-Soliman, a former servant of mine who had attempted my life by poison when we were at Abû-Arisch. And now, as if that was a consideration of no importance whatever, the fellow actually came to seek employment in my service for the third time! For I had already fallen in with him twice since he left me—once at Hodeïdâh, where he was serving as an artilleryman in the army of Abû-Taleb, and again at Mocha, where he was in a similar capacity with the Chériff Heïder, and where he made me acquainted with Rochet d'Hericourt, then on his return from his first wanderings in Abyssinia.

I asked this man how he came to be at Mokallâh, for misgivings began to rise within me as to whether he had not been hired by the Turkish party at Mecca to dog my footsteps.

He replied, however, that in consequence of my representations the Chériffs of Mocha and Hodeïdâh had given him a hint to seek his fortune elsewhere than in their dominions: that he had done so accordingly, first going to

Táez, where he had been in the employment of two French travelers whose names were unknown to him, but who had been to Mareb, and one of whom died at Táez on the thirtieth of the preceding August: that he had come from thence to Mokallâh, still in search of fortune—which, he suspected, had once more slipped through his fingers, although here also he was in the service as an artilleryman, on the very respectable pay of five silver dollars a month, exclusive of provisions.

But the provisions were nominal, he said, and the government always forgot to pay him—and so he begged me for some relief; responding to which appeal I gave him a few pieces of money and sent him away joyful. This was not the first time I had so relieved him, so that he must have acknowledged himself a gainer by the failure of his attempt upon my life. Nevertheless, I should have been sorry to have again taken him into my service—for these Turks are slippery fellows, and he might have returned to his poisoning proclivities at any moment—possibly with success.

I was puzzled with regard to the two French travelers, *whose names were unknown to him*, and who appeared to have followed on my footsteps. For they had sojourned at Táez, where I had been myself five months previously, and where one of them died, according to my informant, on the thirtieth of August, the day on which we left the Seas of Sand. That they could not have been Arnaud and Rochet d'Héricourt was evident, because this man was well acquainted with both.

Notwithstanding many inquiries made by me on this subject, from caravans coming in from Sana and Theama, as well as from people scattered along the coast toward Aden, I could get no further intelligence respecting the “unknown travelers” than that furnished to me by Hadji-Soliman. Nor was it until my return to France, in 1848, after an absence of fifteen years, that the mystery was solved, and I

ascertained that the travelers in question were—d'Alciati de Grilhon and Jules Sainte-Croix-Pajot.

It was the latter—poor fellow!—who died at Tâez, just as he was on the point of realizing the ambition by which he had been so often cheated.

Some time in the year 1843, uncertain in what direction to turn an energy hitherto unproductive to him, it occurred to him to apply to the government for a mission to some far-off land. Still young, and possessed of a robust constitution, already well tested by his travels in Abyssinia, Sainte-Croix-Pajot was fully confident in his qualifications as an explorer. The only question was to what quarter of the globe he should direct his attention, when a friend advised him to select Arabia—a country the interior of which was yet but imperfectly figured by the geographer.

This advice he received with enthusiasm, following it up by preparing a proposition and application, which he forwarded to the minister of Foreign Affairs and the *bureau* of Public Instruction.

But it may not be amiss to remark that every mission comprises at least two journeys; the first of which, and by no means the least fatiguing, is the long tramp in and out of the public departments—a kind of travel for which the compensation is but small in proportion to the inevitable worry caused by disappointed expectations and hope deferred.

While matters were in this state Sainte-Croix-Pajot applied to M. Letronne, who received him kindly, read and corrected his proposition, and furnished him with a recommendation to M. Villemain, then Minister of Public Instruction. Thanks to this introduction, aided by the intervention of the Société Orientale and of many private individuals, among whom I may be permitted to name the Baron Taylor, the project was favorably entertained by the heads of the departments to which it was referred. All obstacles were removed; the Minister of Commerce drew

up instructions for our traveler, and the Minister of Marine presented him with a chronometer, sextant, and barometer.

Previous to his departure, Sainte-Croix-Pajot obtained leave from the military authorities for his cousin to accompany him. This young man, who was a corporal in the seventh regiment of the line, had already shared his wanderings in Abyssinia, and was now delighted with the opportunity of once more tempting adventure with him.

Early in December the two travelers arrived at Cairo, where they remained until about the middle of February, when they went to Djedda. Here they met the late M. Fresnel, who did all he could to dissuade them from their project, to which he saw many obstacles; but Sainte-Croix-Pajot had his mind set upon exploring Mareb—the ancient capital of the opulent Sabians. From Djedda, then, he went successively to Hodeïdah and Mocha, from which points the authorities of the country positively objected to his proceeding further inland, so that he was obliged to proceed to Aden, where he arrived about the end of June.

Here he was kindly received by Captain Haines, the commandant of the garrison, and by Mr. Cruttenden, of his staff—the latter of whom has published a “Narrative of a Journey from Mocha to Sana.” From these gentlemen the travelers procured letters to certain chériffs with whom Great Britain has political relations, and to the Imaum of Muscat.

From Aden Sainte-Croix-Pajot and his cousin, d’Alciati, bent their steps westward, until they had gained one day’s journey beyond the course of the Wadi-Meïdan, which empties itself into the Bender-Tâwacki—the principal harbor of Aden. Thence they reached Toffûa, a village containing some sixty families, situated in a mountain region, upon the territory of the powerful tribe of Béni-Zobeïr—the parent stem of the Algerian branch of that name.

On the third of August they arrived at Tâez, the frontier

town of the state of Abû-Arisch and the Imaumate of Sana, after having traversed the mountainous district in which stands Mount Sabber, respecting which M. Botta, the explorer of Niniveh, has given a curious account.

On the afternoon of the fourteenth d'Alciati was suddenly seized with a violent gastritic complaint, which prostrated him so rapidly that his cousin was prepared for the worst, when he, too, slightly attacked at first, was obliged to succumb to the same malady, under which he finally sank on the eighth day, at the age of thirty-two years. This happened on the thirtieth of August, 1844.

So enfeebled was d'Alciati by the effects of the malady, that he could with difficulty summon strength enough to render the last sad offices to his companion. No assistance was to be procured from the half-wild people of the place, who, instead of displaying any sympathy with the unfortunate survivor, made away with every thing belonging to the travelers that they could lay hands on, in defiance of orders issued by the authorities.

At last d'Alciati, having partially recovered his health, set out for Mocha, where he arrived on the fifteenth of September, and, on the fourteenth of January following, he landed at Suez, alone, wasted by fever, nearly blind, and in a state bordering upon destitution, but yet not devoid of hope—for he reckoned upon meeting there with M. Dumergue, the hotel-keeper, who seems to have been specially commissioned by Providence to afford assistance to luckless travelers cast upon that desolate coast.

Finally, he was entertained with hospitable care by our countrymen at Cairo, under whose kind treatment he soon recovered sufficiently to enable him to return to France.

CHAPTER LV.

HADJI-KHACEM.—MOKALLÂH.

EARLY next morning I had a visit from Hadji-Khacem—the *Emir-el-Bahr*, or captain of the port—who came to invite me to stay with him during my sojourn, together with all my followers, man and beast.

This invitation I at first declined, on the ground that I might at any moment embark for Muscat, and that it would, therefore, be hardly worth while for me to leave the caravansary. On his informing me, however, that I should be unable to procure a vessel of any kind until the close of the Ramadan, I accepted his offer, and we proceeded with him to his dwelling, where he accommodated us in a pleasant room on the first floor, giving us also the use of a large court-yard for our dromedaries.

When we had breakfasted, I set out with Selim to visit the town and its environs.

In the time of Ptolemy, Mokallâh—called by him Mac-cala—was nothing more than a small town containing about three hundred and fifty families, the population consisting chiefly of fishermen and coasting traders—while that portion of the site of the present town which fronts on the harbor was then covered with forest and jungle.

The modern town extends on a frontage of about five miles along the sea-coast—varying considerably in breadth. The space between the harbor and the town forms a kind of square, one side of which is occupied by the custom-house and a long row of handsome dwellings sheltered by spacious verandas. In Lafca—the reed-built quarter, as already mentioned—the houses are, for the most part low, ruinous and dirty. The lower portion of them is devoted to trade, the upper apartments are half-lighted by windows no bigger

than loop-holes. But in the town proper the houses are tastefully and substantially built of stone or brick, consisting generally of two stories above the ground floor, and surmounted by a terraced roof.

In both towns the streets are narrow, while, being formed of clay, and destitute of pavement of any description, they display to a great extent the inconveniences arising from the neglect so common in the East. During the summer they are covered with a dust so fine that the least breath of wind rolls it about in thick clouds. In the wet season they are converted into sinks, into which the wayfarer ventures at the risk of leaving his shoes after him.

To this add the annoyances which, everywhere in the Levant, are continually reminding the traveler of the absence of police regulations. The streets are in utter darkness during the night—a circumstance all the more unfavorable to him who is obliged to traverse them, inasmuch as the filth and garbage of all the houses are there deposited and allowed to accumulate day after day.

Another great inconvenience at Mokallâh is the scarcity of water—the quality of which by no means counterbalances the deficiency of quantity. The best to be had here is conveyed from Bakraïn—a small village lying about a league from the sea, and two hours' journey northeast of the town—by means of an aqueduct, stated to have been built at an enormous cost by Chosroës the Great, celebrated as *Nûschirwân* by oriental writers.

Mokallâh is an open town, destitute of fortifications—for we can hardly count as such the ditch which formerly served as a defense to the old town, against the incursions of the wild nomads. It is not likely that the town could now seriously suffer from the attacks of the latter—from which, indeed, it is sufficiently protected by the three towers which command it at intervals from the mountains.

Its population, composed of Mussulmans, properly so called, of Arabs—Yafas and Kissad—free negroes and

slaves, Jews, and Banians, may be computed at about two thousand five hundred souls.

That of the district, embracing some dozen small towns or burghs, and a number of villages and hamlets, some of which are situated along the coast, others upon the heights, amounts to between thirty and forty thousand.

All these people—the slaves excepted—devote themselves to various branches of industry, such as agriculture, commerce, fishing, and the coasting trade. Their exports consist of *sommadas*, stuffs of wool and of camel's hair, oxen—which are sold at from six to ten dollars each—sheep, at one dollar, dromedaries, millet, maize, tobacco—which brings one dollar for the package of eighteen pounds—coffee, incense, and fruits of all sorts.

Their imports are—rice, raw sugar, candied sugar, white and blue stuffs of linen and cotton, spices, indigo, essences, glassware, needles, thread, cutlery, padlocks, arms of Persian and other manufacture, hardware in general, common porcelain and that made in India and China, imitation jewelry, coral, pearls, antimony, common clockware, gunpowder, dates, looking-glasses, lead, paper, carpetings, wood for buildings, slaves, and horses.

The latter are purchased at low prices by the Arabs, who go in search of them as far as the Nedjêd country and Persia, and carry them in their smacks to Mokallâh, where they generally dispose of them to good advantage. These horses are afterwards distributed, by land and by sea, into the neighboring territories as far as Mareb, Yémen, and even to Zanguibar on the coast of Africa.

The horse-dealers here sit upon benches in the market-place, smoking their pipes tranquilly until purchasers make their appearance. When the trip has been a favorable one, their profits amount to about fifty per cent. on the cargo; but sometimes, from bad weather, unskillful seamanship, or shortness of the supply of forage and water, they lose fully half of the animals embarked by them.

It might be said that this trade would be greatly facilitated by the employment of steamers. But these Arabs have a singular objection to departing from their old routine, shaking their heads at any suggestion of improvement, and contenting themselves when they have suffered any loss which might have been avoided by the commonest care, with repeating in various modulations the inevitable *Allah Akhbar!* Allah is great!

After all, as they share a monopoly of the horse trade with the inhabitants of Muscat and of Bassorah, in consequence of their direct relations with the Nedjêd country and Persia, they generally manage to make a pretty good thing of it.

The Jews are not so numerous at Mokallâh as in the other towns of Hadramaut—nor do they enjoy the same reputation for wealth here as elsewhere in Asia, being looked on as by no means opulent, many of them, indeed, appearing to be in a condition of abject poverty.

The Banians or *Waishyas* thrive here, most of the financial business of the place being in their hands. In fact, every family of the least consideration maintains its Banian, by whom its business affairs are regulated.

The coins current here are the same as those circulated in Muscat and along the Red Sea—the Austrian thaler and the Spanish dollar. Each of these is here worth twenty-four small silver pieces of the country, of very ancient mintage and supposed to contain no alloy. These coins, which are called *harf*, are so thin and battered that their devices are nearly effaced. There are pieces, also, of the value of several harfs, and much experience is required to distinguish these from those which represent the value of but one, as they are all nearly of similar dimensions.

These again are divided into demi-harfs, and subdivided into eight copper coins, called *kamsies*, of which one hundred and ninety-two go to a dollar, and two hundred to a thaler.

French money is not recognized here, and could not be changed unless at a loss of about a fifth on the five-franc piece.

The money of the East India Company, on the contrary—the golden guinea, the rupee, the piece, and the demi-piece or *gasie*—is in favor, while the doubloons of Spain, the quadruples of Portugal, and the sovereigns of England circulate freely.

Turkish and Egyptian moneys are inadmissible, as containing too much alloy. Those of Persia, too—the *caronis*, for instance—are seldom met with, but are taken by the Banians, who send them to Muscat, where they dispose of them to advantage.

The weights in use here are the same as at Djedda and Mocha. They consist of the *quintar* of one hundred pounds, the *rotle* of fourteen ounces, and the *okkie* of ten drachms, which latter represents the weight of seventy-two peppercorns.

The measures in general use are—the *farasle* of eighteen pounds, the *quelen* of fifty-four pounds, the *menn* of nine pounds, and the *guiasse* of six ounces, or of the weight of six dollars.

For measures of distance and length they have the *zamm* of twelve Arab miles, the league of three miles, the mile of fourteen hundred and forty-four yards, the fathom of three cubits and a half, the cubit of fifteen inches, and the inch of twelve lines, each line being of the thickness of six horse-hairs.

At noon we returned to our quarters, and the rest of that day and the following night passed over quietly.

CHAPTER LVI.

HADJI-SOLIMAN AGAIN.—MY SERVANTS.—CLOSE OF THE RAMADAN
—THE KOUTCHËC-BEÏRAM.—I EMBARK FOR MUSCAT.

BUT the tranquil state of affairs recorded at the close of the last chapter was destined to be of short duration, so true is it that in this world of ours misfortune falls upon us just when we least expect it.

The following evening, after the prayer of the Salat-el-Encha, I was suddenly beset by a crowd of people as I was walking near the harbor, and that with such unmistakable evidences of an intention to stone me to death that my only safe course was to run for life, which I did, and regained my lodgings; but hardly had I entered them when I heard the voices of my pursuers outside clamoring furiously beneath the windows, and demanding, with loud cries, that the *nosserani* (Christian) should be delivered to them.

It now flashed upon me that in spite of all my precautions my quality as a traveler had been revealed to these people, and that by no other than Hadji-Soliman, who, having failed in his attempt to poison, had devised this new plan for getting rid of me. But in this he was frustrated by that same Providence who had so often stood by me in the hour of danger, and whose agency was once more visible in the sudden appearance of Hadji-Khacem, at whose commands the mob retired, though sullenly and with murmurs.

From this time I could no longer venture into the streets unless in company with my host, from whom I learned that a similar onset had been made a few months previously upon another traveler who, as a Christian, and, still worse, a European, had been obliged to relinquish his design of penetrating into the country, and to save himself by flight. This traveler, I further learned, was the Baron le Wrede,

a Prussian, whom I knew at Cairo, and who has published a popular work upon Hadramaut and the territory of Jaffea.

To these vexations were added others yet more galling. One morning Mohammed, who had been absent for two or three days, made his appearance for the purpose of taking leave of me—spirited away by the fine promises of the Nagib, Mahomed-Ebné-Abd'el-Habib, who was in want of artillerymen. He would not be persuaded to remain with me, so I paid him his wages, and, wishing him good luck, let him follow his fancy.

Next, Saïda was attacked by a serious illness, so that I was obliged to arrange for leaving her at Mokallâh.

Meantime the end of the fast had arrived—Monday, the second of October, 1844—on the morning of which day, as the muezzins were summoning the people to morning prayer, flourishes of trumpets clanged through the air, the town vibrated to the thunder of a salvo of artillery, and the Easter of the Islam, the *Koutchêc-Beïram*, or *little feast*, commenced.

The *Koutchêc-Beïram* is movable, as are all Mussulman *fêtes*; for the months in the East are lunar, and each lunar year presents a minus of eleven days compared with the solar year. It is called the *little feast* by the Arabs and Turks, to distinguish it from the grand feast of the sacrifice, the *Aït-el-Kébir* or *Courban-Beïram*, which follows the pilgrimage to Mount Ararat, and lasts for five days. The *Koutchêc* lasts for three only.

The latter has two principal features. First comes the close of the fast—a festival of the harem, celebrated from night-fall on the last day of the month of the Ramadan, by illuminations, carousals, and diversions of all kinds. Among these latter I remarked one bearing some resemblance to the “merry-go-round,” so popular at our fairs, but of ruder construction. It consisted of two platforms, suspended like the scales of a balance at the end of a beam of wood, pivoted

on a large post fixed in the ground. Numbers of people squeezed themselves together, like so many children, upon these platforms, and were then wheeled round and round by the motive power of a negro, who had to devote all his physical energies to the task.

On the following morning the ceremony is continued in the mosques, by administering an oath of allegiance and homage to the authorities, and by distributing gifts of all sorts to the women and children, and provisions among the poor.

Finally, on the second and third days, the festival is wound up by a round of amusements and an interchange of friendly visits between the harems.

Early on the morning of the 6th of October, I was called upon by Hadji-Khacem, who came to inform me that he had made a bargain with the owner of a smart Persian craft to carry me, in ten days, over the three hundred and twenty leagues of sea between Mokallâh and Muscat, wind and weather permitting, for the sum of twenty dollars. This vessel was to weigh anchor in the evening, just after sunset.

While he was with me, I took an opportunity of recommending Saïda to him—paying her, in his presence, the sum of one hundred dollars, to keep her from want until some provision could be made for her. I then enfranchised her formally, by which act I absolved myself from all pains and penalties imposable for traveling during the Ramadan.

The deed of enfranchisement ran as follows :

“Glory to Allah !

“The most charitable, most honorable El-Hadj-Abdel-Hamid-Bey hereby attests and certifies that he has granted her liberty to the negro woman named Saïda, a native of Zanguibar.

“Her description is as follows :

"Features broad, an incision in the cheek,* skin black, eyelids black.

"This emancipation is full and entire, in order that she may be counted among the free, and may enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to free Mussulmans.

"He has granted this to her for charity and the love of Allah, following in the path traced by our lord Mohammed.

"He trusts that the omnipotent Allah may consider this emancipation as a worthy action, and that he will pardon unto his servant as many sins as this woman has ribs, according to the word of the holy book given unto us by our noble Prophet.

"May prayer and welfare follow her, her family, and her friends, by night and by day!

"Given at Mokallâh, this 5th chaouâl of the year 1261 of the Hegira."

This matter arranged, I presented my host with the dromedary given to me by the Imam of Sana, sending the other four to the market-place for sale, in charge of Aaïn-el-Châhin and Selim. These animals brought two hundred thalers—exactly half the amount for which I purchased them.

After the morning meal, I summoned the chouafs around me, thanked them for the faithful and intelligent services rendered by them on the journey, gave them a certificate testifying to the same, charged them with my best respects to their master, the good Abu-Bekr-el-Doâni, and presented them with one hundred dollars as backsheesh—or, according to the true Arab orthography of the word, *bekhrchich*.

And now, with nobody to assist me but my trusty Selim, whom no amount of gold would have tempted to desert me,

* The negroes make incisions in the cheeks of their infants, in compliment to their idols, or *fetishes*, as well as from a superstition that such marks protect them from the machinations of evil spirits, and against misfortune. Each race, tribe, and family has its own peculiar marks.

and whom, indeed, I regarded almost as a brother, I occupied myself in preparations for our departure, such as the purchase of provisions and other necessary articles for a sea voyage.

When I had arranged these matters it was the time of evening prayer, after which supper, and at half-past seven o'clock I took leave of poor Saïda, who had been so fortunate as to meet with some free negroes of her own country and tribe, with whom she found a home for the present, and a future prospect of returning to Zanguibar, if she recovered. Soon afterward, accompanied by Hadji-Khacem, who furnished me with a letter of introduction to a friend of his at Muscat—Séid-ben-Calfen by name—we went down to the pier, to which a *felucca*, or small row-boat, presently shot up. In this we embarked by the light of a lantern, and soon found ourselves on board the vessel which was to convey us to the capital of Oman, and which was only waiting for our arrival to put to sea.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE KHETHAËFA.

THE smart Persian craft in which our passage had been engaged by Hadji-Khacem, and on board which I was now safely stowed with Selim, was called the “Khethaêfa”—which is the Persian word for the bird called the “Swallow.”

It is customary for Arabian and Persian ships, although vessels of insignificant appearance compared with those of Europe, to be honored with names indicative of some superior quality—such as fast sailing or strength and safety.

In some cases the allusion borne by the name refers to the bold sailors by which the vessel is manned—in others she is called, simply, by the name of the owner or captain.

The name of our captain was Hadji-Khammis.

As we came on board, a loud buzzing sound of voices announced that we were not the only passengers—a suspicion confirmed when I got my head above the netting and saw through the dusk a swarm of people packed together like herrings in a barrel. In addition to this, the vessel was overloaded with merchandise of all sorts to such an extent, that her load water-line was submerged, so that they were obliged to fit her with temporary bulwarks to keep the sea from breaking over the deck. These bulwarks were fastened by means of strong wooden bolts and ropes made of *lifa*—a reticulated membrane taken from the branches of the date-palm.

There were about one hundred and twenty passengers on board, including forty women and some slave children. The crew consisted of from twenty-five to thirty men, most of them negroes. And all these on board a vessel calculated to accommodate, with a reasonable degree of comfort, no more than from seventy to eighty people!

Many of the latteen-rigged vessels navigating these waters are without decks, and sewn together with twine instead of being fastened with nails. The martyred passengers who risk their lives in them are obliged to sleep upon the bare planks, unless they have had the prudence and the means to provide themselves with mats or pieces of carpet—and each sleeper has to take up his position as he best can, and to defend it, tooth and nail, against the encroachments of his neighbors.

The cabin of our craft had been partitioned off, so as to afford a shelter to the women during the heat of the day. In front of it a kind of tent was erected, in which some wealthy merchants and djellabs took up their quarters. The children knocked about among the crew—those who were

strong and active enough making themselves useful as cabin-boys, in which capacity they made some progress in nautical gymnastics and improved their opportunities with regard to meat and drink.

Around the mast I observed a group consisting of three dervishes of very fantastic appearance and a doctor of Mussulman law. The latter was clad in a djebba of white calico, over which was thrown an abbaye of black camel's hair—and his descent from the family of the Prophet was marked by the green turban in which his head was enveloped—a distinction which entitled him to a position of honor among our company.

As for Selim and myself, we took up our places on the poop, with our baggage and provisions—the latter consisting of rice, flour, honey, butter, salt fish and dried fruits. The caboose—like the public ovens of the middle ages—was open to all alike for the purpose of cooking, but each passenger had to find his own provisions.*

We had taken the precaution of bringing a supply of fresh water with us, which rendered us independent of two great cases containing that laid in for the crew and the other passengers, and which were lashed on either side of the mast.

On these cases the three dervishes and the doctor of Mussulman law had established themselves—an association which was dissolved that very night, however. For the dervishes proved to be swarming with vermin, while the doctor of Mussulman law was rather a clean person than otherwise—for a doctor of Mussulman law.

When we arrived on board, the male and female passengers were mingled together upon the deck; the latter having their faces veiled—which did not prevent them, however, from taking part in the conversation, whether private or general. I looked round for the captain, and seeing, seated on the quarter-bench, a man of some thirty-five years of age—a man whose countenance denoted honesty but

lacked every expression of capability—I addressed him, and found, to my surprise, that he was our *nacoda*—the Persian term for a skipper or captain, called *reïs* in the Red Sea.

In addition to the *nacoda*, all Arab and Persian vessels are provided with a steersman or pilot—called the *roubban*. Anxious to ascertain whether there was any seaman on board upon whom we might depend, I addressed myself, next, to an ancient mariner, and found that he was the functionary in question.

“I am delighted to have the opportunity of making a voyage in the same ship with you, sir,” said I to this venerable *roubban*—“for I should judge from your appearance that you are a thorough seaman.”

“Ali may flatter himself that he knows his business, and that without any brag,” replied he—“you will believe this when I tell you that I have seen wrecked and cast away no fewer than seven ships of which I had charge from time to time. The man who has had all this experience ought to know something of his business.”

“If Arab sailors are like horsemen, who must have many falls before they know how to ride,” rejoined I, “no man should be better versed in his profession than yourself. Nevertheless, I shall be much indebted to you if you postpone the performance of an eighth experience until after the “*Khethaêfa*” has arrived at her destination.”

“Allah-Akhbar!” replied the ancient *roubban*—“Allah is great!”

I have alluded to the dervishes as men of fantastic appearance, to describe which I shall do my best.

The costume of these wild-looking personages consists of waistcoats of ample dimensions, patched up with innumerable bits of cloth of all colors, like the garment worn by the personator of Folly in our carnival masquerades. Their lower limbs are encased in wide pantaloons of blue or white cotton stuff; their heads covered with pointed bonnets in

the style of those attributed by our almanac makers to Nostradamus and Matthew Laensbergh, and round the body of each is coiled a rosary consisting of ninety-nine beads as big as filberts, divided into sections of thirty-three beads each. Some of these chaplets are composed of one hundred and one beads as large as walnuts. Each of them carries in his girdle a djembie and a hatchet—the latter used by them for splitting wood, while it harmonizes in effect with their formidable aspect. Three cocoa-nut shells also form a conspicuous feature of the garb of each. The largest of these, fashioned into the form of a bowl, and suspended at the back, is handed round by them for alms; another, of smaller size, serves for a water-cup, and hangs at the left side, clinking with another, smaller still, and used for drinking coffee.

Their principal occupations are taking snuff, smoking, telling their beads, and performing tricks of jugglery.

Their snuff-boxes are made of horn, their chiboques of copper, and their walking-staffs of the long, nasal bone of the saw-fish.

Quantities of amulets and knickknacks, composed of shark's teeth, boar's tusks, and shells, are attached to their garments; and over all is thrown the skin of a lion or panther, which serves as a couch at night. Long, heavy black hair and beards, florid complexions, double chins, white teeth, blood-red lips, and the eyes of the lynx—and now you have the picture of the three holy men from whose contact the doctor of Mussulman law shrank so incontinently.

These Mohammedan dervishes wander at their will through all the Mussulman countries, without troubling themselves about industry, for public credulity pays their traveling expenses: and when they can make nothing by begging, they steal.

Many privileges are accorded to them—even the *entrée* to the harems, allowed to none besides except the eunuchs.

The grandees of Turkey, Egypt, Persia, and Arabia usually maintain a dervish in their establishments, or, rather, are maintained by a dervish, who stands to them in the relation of the Orsinis and Ruggieris to our kings of old.

Osman-Pacha, who was governor of Hedjaz in 1842, had for his principal adviser a dervish named Ibrahim-Effendi—a man possessing an income of thirty thousand thalers, and whose good graces were accounted of more value than those of the Pacha himself. While at Mecca I frequently had the honor of a visit from this influential person, who evidently had a great desire to find out what brought me there.

It was by a dervish—a favorite of Mahmoud, father of Abd'ul-Medjid—that the massacre of the janizaries was planned.

The traveling dervishes are for the most part spies employed by oriental magnates for the purpose of procuring secret information.

This reputation, added to that enjoyed by them for vermin, prompted us to follow the example of the doctor of Mussulman law and keep at a respectful distance from these holy men—to whose maintenance during the voyage, however, each of us was obliged to contribute in turn.

About half an hour after our embarkation, the pilot, taking advantage of a high tide to get out of the port of Mokallâh, brought the "Khethaêfa" to anchor out at sea, in ten-fathom water. The moon was not yet up. A few stars only twinkled in the sky and were reflected on the surface of the deep, calm sea, between which and the upper immensity of space our bark appeared as if suspended like a balloon.

When the rowers who brought us along side pulled away on their return, they seemed at first as if plunging into a gulf of darkness. But soon the light of their lantern blazed around the felucca, flashing upon the ripple made by them, and bringing distinctly to our view their gleaming eyes and bare arms. For a while the objects within this

luminous circle were plainly visible. Then it contracted by degrees, until it looked like a star shot down from heaven and spinning slowly over the surface of the water. And then the star moved tremulously hither and thither, like a mad wildfire of the fens—disappeared, re-appeared, traveled up a slope, again went out and again twinkled, until it all at once seemed to vanish into the bowels of the earth.

Before midnight the passengers had settled down to sleep, and all was calm and quiet until morning light.

CHAPTER LVIII.

AT SEA.

ABOUT seven in the morning, our crew, who had been occupied most of the night in making things “ship-shape,” hauled up the sail, and all that day we crept slowly along the coast, with a light breeze from the south southwest.

The merchants and djellabs reclined listlessly under their canvas, talking over business speculations. The women kept within the shelter of the cabin, where they gossiped, smoked, and played upon instruments of music, to while away the time. From the time the “Khethaêfa” got under way, but few of these people attempted to maintain a perpendicular position—not even the doctor of Mussulman law, who had propped himself up against a bale of goods, with his head poked forward and his feet elevated to a position considerably higher than it, while nothing could induce him to speak to anybody, lest opening his mouth might be attended with worse results. But the three dervishes still maintained their seats on the water-cases, where they occupied themselves in smoking hascheesh.

Selim and I took up a position by the bulwarks, swinging ourselves to and fro to the heaving of the vessel. I had my gun at hand—one barrel charged with ball, in readiness for a porpoise or a shark; the other with shot, in honor of the sea-mews, gulls, and other marine birds, some of which were so obliging occasionally as to pass within shot of us.

About twelve or fifteen sailors were on duty, and they were a picturesque-looking set of fellows, as they grouped together around the mast, or, on the poop, mixed up with the small slave-boys, who amused themselves with bouts at popular boyish games.

The Khethaêfa, like another *Argo*, seemed to go nearly at her own will, except that the roubban might now and then be observed lazily putting the helm to starboard or port, as we slowly ripped our way through the waters of this fair Indian Ocean, which to-day were glassy and reflective as a mirror.

We sailed past Rocab, and then slowly by Shahire—two small villages of amphitheatrical form, looking like two pyramids, suspended between “the blue above and the blue below.” So limpid are the waters here that we could plainly distinguish, far down in the deep caverns, the wondrous creations of the coral, and the strange green things that grow, like forests, over the submarine hills and valleys.

One peculiarity of the Indian Ocean is its brilliant phosphorescence—the wake of ships sailing upon it being frequently converted, at night, into a singularly luminous train, while a spray of sparkling particles arises at the dip of an oar. When the log-line is taken in, at these times, it flashes in the dark with the lustrous radiance of a chain of rubies and diamonds. This phenomenon, which is also observable in the Mediterranean, but to a much less extent, is attributed to the presence of myriads of phosphorescent animalculæ.

In speaking of this sea, I will also briefly refer to those

others which, from time immemorial, have been the highway of commerce from Arabia and the far Orient—the Persian Gulf, which opens from the estuary of the Euphrates, and the Red Sea, a vast lake unfed by the waters of any river. These, like the Indian Ocean, oppose many obstacles to the mariner who navigates their waters—shoals and rocks, and multitudes of small islands.

The ancient writers refer with dread to the perils of navigation encountered in these Arab seas. Agatharchides, Artemidorus, Arrian, Edrissi, and Strabo are unanimous in their statements on this subject—describing at one time the fearful tempests of the Persian Gulf, and anon laying the scene of their dismal narrations in some of the neighboring waters.

Even the Phœnicians—those daring mariners of the olden time—never launched their barks upon these redoubtable seas without much preliminary prayer and sacrifice to the gods; and, on their safe return from a voyage, they were crowned with garlands and led in procession to the temples, where they offered up thanksgivings for their miraculous preservation from the perils of the deep.

Nearchus, who explored these waters by order of his Macedonian chief, penetrating to the Persian Gulf three hundred and twenty-six years before the Christian era, met with more adventures and reverses than did Christopher Columbus in his discovery of America. He ran aground upon shoals; whales of monstrous size floundered about him in the deep; and, when he looked to the neighboring shores for safety, his eye met naught but sterile sands, on which moved half-naked savages, whose strange aspect and hostile gestures threatened him with yet another danger.

And such, likewise, was the character attributed by these writers to the Red Sea, speaking of which Edrissi says:

“This sea is subject to fearful tempests. The islands

with which it is studded are sterile and inhospitable, nor is there aught of good to be obtained, either from its depths or upon its surface.

"It differs much from the Indian Ocean, in the depths of which are found the rarest pearls, among the mountains bordering which the most valuable jewels abound, and along the shores of which are to be seen flourishing towns and regal residences. There grow the ebony, the aloe tree, camphor, and many other perfumes, and there also is to be found the goat from which musk is obtained.

"The Red Sea produces nothing but amber, and that, too, is found in the Indian Ocean."

The length of the Red Sea, from the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb—which signifies *the gate of tears*—to Suez, is about fourteen hundred Arab miles. Its breadth—hardly twenty miles at the entrance of the Strait—is about one hundred and eighty between Souakem, on the coast of Nubia, and Confodâh, in the Hedjaz.

It is only during the prevalence of the *chemâl*, or north-eastern monsoon, which blows from the middle of October to the middle of April, that vessels can make their way into this sea. In the Persian Gulf, on the contrary, the favorable wind is the *k'oos*, which blows from the southwest during half the year, enabling ships to pass through the Straits of Ormuz, which is less blockaded by islands and reefs than that of Bab-el-Mandeb. To Europeans, of course, with their steam-vessels, these obstacles are of no account.

Still creeping along the coast, we passed successively Schahher, Haumie, Scharma, and Bogatschuâ, lying low upon the bank, beneath the shade of mossouacks and palm-trees.

"Gossier!" exclaimed a sailor, as he touched me on the shoulder and pointed in the direction of Cape Bogatschûa.

There are names so charged with memories that the mention of them puts all other ideas aside for the time.

This Gossier was the famous *Myos-Hormus* of the Greeks, celebrated for the sojourn made there by *Ælius Gallus*, the Roman General, with his troops, twenty-one years before the Christian era.

Three years previous to his arrival at Gossier, *Ælius Gallus* had been commissioned by Augustus to explore Arabia Felix, of which the countries now known as Mareb and Hadramaut formed a part. The reputation of this country for varied products, and the ancient renown of its commerce with the Indies, had inspired that emperor with a hope either of acquiring powerful friends or vanquishing rich enemies; to compass which ends he counted much upon the Nabathœans, his allies, who were then in possession of Petra, the city of tombs.

But in this hope he was disappointed—for a Nabathœan chief, by name Syllœus, having offered his services to the Roman general as guide, behaved with a perfidy described as follows by Strabo :

“In place of pointing out the safe channels and the coasts that might be approached without danger, he caused *Ælius Gallus* to venture into impracticable routes, decoying him, by innumerable turns, into wild places by rocky coasts, bristling with concealed reefs and destitute of anchorage; and in those places he suffered great damage from the flow and ebb of the tide.”

In those days the Romans knew so little of the geography of Arabia, that it was easy to persuade them of the impossibility of getting there from Egypt without traversing the Red Sea. They built, consequently, a number of galleys at Arsinoé or Cleopatria, near the canal communicating between the salt lakes and the gulf. In these they embarked to the number of ten thousand foot-soldiers, Romans and auxiliaries—the latter consisting of a thousand Nabathœans and five hundred Jews—under the guidance of Syllœus.

After a stormy passage, in which many of the vessels

were lost, Ælius Gallus landed at *Leukécomé*—now Moilâh, where he was obliged to remain with his army for a whole year, to enable them to recover from the hardships suffered by them on this voyage.

At the end of this time he again set out; but, between the scarcity of water and the perfidy of his guide, his progress was so slow that it was many months before he reached the oasis of Anagrana or Negrana—now Nedjerân, the capital of which he took by storm, compelling the king to seek for safety by flight.

From thence the Romans continued their onward march until they arrived at a river, the passage of which was disputed with them by the Arab army, which suffered a loss of seven thousand men in the battle that followed. This affair led to the capture of the town of Asca, from which the victor marched upon Athrulla, possessed himself of it without striking a blow, and garrisoned it with his troops.

There he laid in a provision of wheat and dates, and continued his march until he arrived at Mareb, then governed by a king named Ilasarus—the Houl-Azar of the Orientals—and to this town he laid siege for six days, when the scarcity of water compelled him to retire. According to the report of prisoners taken by him, he was then but two days' march from the spice countries.

Convinced too late of the perfidy of Syllæus, the Roman general set out on his return by routes different from those in which he had been so completely bewildered, so that it took him but little over fifty days to perform a journey that had lately occupied him for six months. Shaping his course toward the southeast, he touched the Indian Ocean at Gosier, whence, after a sojourn of a month, he made his way by sea and over land to Souakem and Alexandria, with such of his troops as had survived sickness, hunger, and hardship.

And so much for Ælius Gallus, the Roman general.

About sunset this evening, and more than eighteen hundred years after the time just spoken of, we, too, came to anchor at a cable's length from the self-same spot, in four-fathom water and within the shelter of the harbor, in which there were already some vessels trading between Muscat and Mokallâh, or on their way from Aden to Mocha. These craft had put in for the night, during which no Arab mariner will risk the dangers of navigation—the stealthy pirate and the hidden reef; and where harbors are not to be found, the voyagers bring to at certain stations known to them at intervals along the coast, to which they approach closely where it is inhabited by friendly tribes.

The port of Gossier is formed by a small cove, sheltered, landward, by the great chain of mountains hemming in Arabia from Suez to the Straits of Ormuz—seaward by shoals, over which the billows break into calm water.

CHAPTER LIX.

DHAFÂR.

ON the eighth of October, at five o'clock in the morning, we again put to sea, although it was not yet quite daylight. Our course was now laid away from the shore, at a sharp angle with that followed by us yesterday—Cape Bogatschûa representing the apex of the angle.

And ever as our bark furrowed the waters, it struck from their surface showers of phosphorescent globules, which glided away aft from the sides of the vessel and ran together like liquid fire in her wake, until the first flush of dawn began to encroach upon the deep ultramarine blue of the horizon.

Then Djebel-Asad—or the mountain of lions—showed its dark profile against the orange glow, suggestive in its outline of a colossal camel stretched at length along the shore and drinking out of the sea. And now the light begins to run along the coast, and towns, villages, isolated dwellings and headlands develop themselves to our view, until, just as we came in view of Rader-Segh'ir, the king of day rose up like a vast orb of gold before Cape Bogatschûa.

Gossier now stood forth revealed by the touch of light, its forts and minarets gleaming with the radiant gold, while the harbor was yet lost to view in the morning fog, through which the sharp masts of the vessels at anchor pierced upward, like giant lances decked with drooping flags.

To-day, as yesterday, we crept along before a light breeze, doubling successively Saba Hareyer, Wadi-el-Masellâh and Sihût. When evening came, the nacoda wanted to cast anchor at Hattâb, but the roubban recommended that we should push further on, and so, having passed by the headlands of Agab and Scharwân, we came to anchor in six-fathom water at about a quarter of a league from shore, opposite Keschin, anciently the *Sachalites* of the Greeks.

Hardly had we anchored when a host of fishermen, navigating small pirogues made out of single tree-trunks and with palm-leaf mats for sails, hailed us with offers of fish. So diminutive are these pirogues that they seem to run almost gunwale under, even when their cargo consists of the solitary navigator alone. They are propelled by means of a paddle with a circular blade at either end, and have to be continually baled out to prevent them from swamping.

When I thought of the "Khethaêfa" in comparison with our splendid European ships, I seemed, indeed, to have trusted myself to a frail bark—but now I fancied myself on board of some mighty argosy, as I looked down from her bulwarks upon the little nut-shells by which she was surrounded.

Our first landing-place was to be at Dhafâr, and we were

not to arrive there before the morrow—at least I was so informed at Mokallâh. As for the Arab pilots, if you ask them when such and such a place should be reached, the invariable reply is—"When it pleaseth Allah."

And it happily did please Allah that we should arrive at Dhafâr on the afternoon of the following day—the ninth of October. As soon as this place loomed in view, everybody proceeded to make his toilet. The anchor was let go, and we were taken ashore in the felucca belonging to our vessel, but, as the Arabs had never yet built a landing-pier at this point, many of the passengers had to effect a landing by wading more than knee-deep, while others, whose means enabled them to be lavish of backsheesh, were borne ashore by the sailors.

Immediately on landing I made a rush for fresh water—a luxury which I could hardly realize to myself of late. Then having laid in a provision of some small citrons no bigger than walnuts, but excellent as traveling companions in hot weather, I bent my steps toward the ruins of Dhafâr—the *Saphar* of Scripture, the *Dufar* of Marco Polo.

There is another town of the same name at the foot of the Sumara Mountains, about ten miles southwest of Yerim, in the Imaumate of Sana—and the two have sometimes been confounded by oriental geographers. But it is probable that the one to which I now took my way is that spoken of by the historian Maçoudi, who tells us that most of the Hamyarite kings used to reside at Dhafâr. And as that city, enriched by its commercial relations with the Indies, was the most interesting of the towns of southern Arabia, there is reason to suppose that its namesake of western Yémen was built and so called in a spirit of rivalry by the sovereign of some petty province, whose ambition it was to say—"I reign at Dhafâr!"

At the present day the name Dhafâr—signifying *metropolis*—is applied no longer to any particular town here, but belongs to a series of villages situated upon or near the coast

of the Indian Ocean, between the headlands of Schedjer, Merbat, and Noss.

At one of these villages—El-Belid by name—I found some magnificent ruins, in the architecture of which the elliptic arch and the ogee are discernible. The stones of these ruined buildings are cut with geometrical precision, and to each house there was attached a mosque or oratory—a circumstance to which the following tradition relates :

“In former days Dhafâr possessed but one mosque for all its inhabitants.

“A Bedouin who came into the town at the hour of morning prayer, entered this mosque, in which the whole of the male population were assembled at their devotions—which over, he claimed the hospitality of the inhabitants.

“A strife arose among them as to who should be his host. Some seized him by one arm, some by another—and, between them, he was torn to pieces.

“Then the prince who reigned at that time, fearing lest such an act might again occur, shut up the common mosque, and gave orders that each inhabitant should have a private one of his own.

“And thenceforth, when a stranger entered Dhafâr, he was to be the guest of him within the walls of whose oratory he first happened to set foot.”

El-Belid stands upon a peninsula—or what formerly was a peninsula—between the sea and a gulf which, during the rainy season, is a lake of fresh water at low tides, of salt water at high tides. Ptolemy, who mentions *Saphar metropolis* among the towns of Arabia, does not place it immediately upon the seashore, from which I infer, with M. Fresnel, that El-Belid, situated on that portion of the coast still bearing the name of Dhafâr, was only the port, or *piræus*, of the ancient oriental metropolis.

This locality, then, would appear to coincide with the *Mosca Portus* mentioned by Arrian as the rendezvous of all

the merchants who, in his time, traded for spices and other products between India, Persia, and Arabia.

Fortunately for history, the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel has transmitted to us very exact information respecting the principal marts of this commerce. Without his testimony, indeed, we should not have known that the Phœnicians had selected Hadramaut and the Schedjer coast as their commercial seaboard in these parts.

Many of the places mentioned by this prophet, such as Aden, Haran, and Cannah, ports of the Indian Ocean, still preserve their original names, as do also Sana, Saphar, and Saba. But of Vadan, once situated on the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, there exists no trace, nor is even its precise locality at present known.

From several passages in Ezekiel it is manifest that the Hebrews were well acquainted with Arabia Felix, maintaining with it constant commercial relations.

Theophrastus, too, has furnished much valuable information respecting the spice and incense trade of these countries. He says :

“Incense, myrrh, and cassia grow in the country of the Sabians and Hadramites, the two former upon the mountains and islands of these parts.

“The shrub that produces incense is taller than that from which myrrh is obtained ; both of them are to be found in a wild state as well as under cultivation.

“The inhabitants make incisions into them with a knife, letting the resinous matter flow upon the ground.

“Myrrh and incense, when harvested, were carried to the Temple of the Sun, so venerated by the Sabians, where they were watched over by armed men.

“Each proprietor there displayed his portion, accompanied by a tablet setting forth the measure and price ; then the merchants came and deposited beside each lot the price marked upon the tablet.

“After which came the priest, who took away a third of

these moneys for the Divinity, leaving the rest for the proprietors."

From this it appears that the traffic of myrrh and incense was under the protection of the Temple, and carried on in silence, just as the trade in coffee is in these same countries at the present day.

Lastly, upon this subject Edrissi states that the most fragrant incense was that of Dhafâr; that of the most powerful odor coming from Zeilah, a port on the east coast of Africa, which is even now renowned for its traffic in this article.

As I returned from my visit to the ruins this evening I paused to look at our craft, the "Khethaêfa," as she floated tranquilly on the waters some sixty fathoms off. Her negro sailors were fishing over the side with lines, and pulling up quantities of the finny tribes. Thousands of gulls hovered around them, darting down, now and then, as a fish was drawn above the surface, and often snatching it away before it reached the hand of the captor. Sometimes, however, the greedy bird fell a victim to his gluttony, and the lucky fisherman caught a fish and a seagull on the same hook.

When I came on board, I heard a voice near me as of one engaged in prayer. It was the Fatha, recited by the youngest cabin-boy, whom Ali, our roubban, held upright on the stern-rail, from whence his voice went forth to the sea, to the winds, to the clouds, and to Allah. Those familiar with the customs of sailors in the Mediterranean and in our channel will remember how it is the usage there, too, for the cabin-boy, as the least sinful of the crew, to offer up a prayer to our Lady, that she may bless the ship with a prosperous fishing or a safe passage. These prayers are usually made at morning and evening; but in the Arab seas the crews place themselves under the protection of the Prophet, and address a fervent prayer to Allah no less than five times a day.

These recitations of the Fatha constituted the poetry of

the voyage. Often, at these moments, would my memory recur to my native country and friends far away—thoughts arising up before me like those shifting clouds which now cumulate aloft like mountains, now spread away horizontally in the semblance of a lake, while again they wreath themselves into human shapes, blending softly their ever-varying forms upon the deep azure of the sky.

And there was a solemn charm in it when night came, if we may call that night which, in these latitudes, is but the absence of day. Then, as the stars lit up, one by one, in the mysterious east, while the deepening shades of the west, yet barred with ribs of gold, melted successively into warm purple and diaphanous green—then would there seem to arise a murmuring music from the solemn sea, as the fishes leaped like silver lightning from its waters. Then would the steersman quit the helm, as if resigning it into the hands of Allah—and again from the stern-rail went forth the voice of the sailor-boy, repeating the Fatha as the last ray of sunlight went down behind the western horizon.

And this scene we witnessed from day to day, each recurrence of it seeming to tinge the spirit with a tender melancholy.

CHAPTER LX.

A DEAD CALM.

OVERCOME with fatigue, I slept soundly to-night for the first time since I embarked—and that, too, in spite of the remorseless bites of certain enemies of human repose: and we were again out to sea and already a good way from Dhafar, when I was awakened by the call to morning prayer.

Had the petition of that prayer been for a calm, fully, indeed, ought our wishes to have been gratified; for, so sluggish was the air, that progress soon became impossible, and we were obliged to come to anchor out in the open sea.

The heat was appalling. From noontide until four o'clock, we seemed to breathe flames of fire, while the air undulated as with waves of molten lead. During these hours all were held prostrate by a torpor which it was impossible to shake off: nor would it have availed us to have gone ashore in search of shelter, for the coast was utterly parched and sterile. And as we lay there upon the deck, each one wrapped in his abbaye or his mantle, what would not the most philosophical among us have given for a chance of repose beneath the cool, shady palm-trees of the desert!

As night fell, fires were to be seen gleaming all along the coast, which is inhabited by Bedouins who make a living by the passing ships, to which they sell water, charcoal, and meat. It is customary to give these people, before dealing with them, presents of flour and biscuit, on which they set great value, as also upon rice—for they are destitute of cereals, not being cultivators of the ground.

Three of these people, spying us from afar, launched out in a skiff made of four planks stitched together with palm-leaf cord, with a mat hoisted on an oar for a sail. When this frail, but picturesque bark came alongside our vessel, the senior mariner of its small crew boarded us, and begged for some provisions—to which the nacoda responded by setting on foot a general collection among the passengers, saying to them, in a loud voice,

“O ye who are blessed with abundance! bestow some of it upon these Arabs, for the land that you behold yonder has been their heritage ever since it was ceded by Allah to their fathers Abraham and Ishmael.”

The result of our contributions was given to the Bedouins, who put back to their heritage well pleased with the gift,

which it would have been imprudent to have withheld from them—for, in cases of shipwreck, they have absolute power over the lives of the castaways. In some instances, where mariners have offended these people, their cables have been cut at night, and their vessels wrecked in consequence. Others have woken up to the consciousness of the water coming into their ship, and have found, on investigation, that the Bedouins had cut away a plank in revenge for some slight.

Our passengers always became lively as night drew near. Then the melodies of the singers thrilled upon the evening breeze, the romancers began their stories, the women played their wild music on the *darbouka* and mandoline, and the negro sailors, who had been running about all day half naked, beneath a roasting sun, which must have agreeably reminded them of their native Guinea or Soudan, amused us—or themselves, rather—by dancing the *tam-tam*, while we smoked and sipped our coffee as we contemplated that strange pyrrhic.

And, mingling with all these sounds, came ever and anon from landward the roar of the lion, the yells of panthers, the howl of the hyena, and the short bark of the jackal—while the dolphins, sportive as our dusky mariners, came leaping and frolicking about the ship. Some of the passengers took these last for sirens, and gravely recommended each other not to be led astray by their seductive wiles.

The Arabs believe implicitly in the existence of sirens, which many of them profess to have seen. And why not? With my own eyes I have seen two specimens of the unicorn—one at Dârfour, in 1839, the other at the Hotel Lannoë, in the Island of Bourbon, in 1847. And I also saw at Mecca that famous Niam-Niam, or human being with a tail, who, some few years ago, wrought confusion in the Academy of Sciences at Paris.

Our three dervishes also contributed, after their own fashion, to the amusements of the evening. Two of them

carried leather wallets containing a dozen venomous serpents, with which they performed juggling tricks—their menagerie boasting also of some forty scorpions, red, black, and yellow, and of the largest and most atrocious kind. These reptiles they permitted to crawl about upon their hands, arms, and faces.

The third dervish was also a juggler, playing all manner of tricks with a cannon ball, to which were attached a nail five or six inches long and a number of small bells. On this nail he balanced the ball, somewhat as one of our mountebanks does a ladder or beam upon his chin, making the bells tinkle as he spun it round.

When they had gone through all their feats, they went round among the passengers, holding out their bowls for contributions.

Next morning, the eleventh of October, the coast appeared quite deserted, the Bedouins of yesterday not being in sight, nor any sign of them to be seen except some piles of charcoal and fire-wood on the beach. Upon asking the the nacoda how it came that this property was thus left apparently unprotected, he replied,

“Such things are here confided to the honor of the tribe, and are equally safe from depredation by their own people and by passing crews. Do not suppose, however, that the thief who should be so rash as to meddle with them would go unpunished. The eye of many a watcher is gleaming from behind yonder rocks, and he who would lay hands on so much as a stick would be sure to pay dearly for his dishonesty.”

About nine o'clock the roubban suddenly exclaimed, “Allah akhbar!” pointing at the same time to the smoke from his chibouque, which, instead of ascending vertically, wreathed slightly away to one side, indicating the awakening of the breeze that had so long slumbered, and which soon came rippling over the water, until it reached our tightening sail.

We now glided past many headlands, including that of Noss, our horizon being bounded by a long, low line of green rocks, by which the channel seemed as if buoyed out, and toward evening we neared the group of islands known as Kourya-Muria, at the northeast end of a beautiful bay of which, bearing the same name, we came to anchor.

Opposite to us lay the small town of Hasec, the territory of which, situated partly in Hadramaut and partly in Oman proper, extends from Cape Mindjy to Cape Mastraka.

This harbor abounds in marine plants used in the manufacture of soda. The neighboring mountains are covered with layers of shells and deposits of guano, to secure a monopoly of which latter steps were taken by the British government in 1857.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE ASIEP.

ON the twelfth of October, the wind still favoring us, we doubled Capes Garwân and Sangra—the latter of which forms the extreme point of Hadramaut, where Oman proper commences. This portion of the Indian Ocean is called by the Arabs *Birket-Sangra*—the pond of Sangra.

Here the mountains descend abruptly to the plain, revealing a tract of sterile country much broken up by the action of water.

Our progress was but slow, for this coast is much obstructed by rocks and shoals, the presence of which is detected by the color of the water, or the breaking of the waves. About four o'clock we drifted into a current, however, which carried us rapidly toward Ras-Mastraka, near which our sailors brought us to anchor after their own

fashion, by casting out a couple of grappling-irons upon the rocks—for regular anchor we had none.

Here I went ashore, and, crossing the beach, ascended some high ground, from which I could discern nothing but sandy hills, over which some Bedouins were making their way. These people were bringing with them a few sheep and goats—the current coin of these parts; for they know not the use of money, but dispose of their live stock in exchange for various articles brought by the coasters. It is difficult to understand how human beings can exist in these inhospitable regions; and yet these Bedouins are more attached to their native country than we to ours, separation from it being to them the greatest of sorrows. And thus, like the frugal yet vigorous plants that sustain themselves in the clefts of the most sterile rocks, they increase and multiply upon a soil where a European, abandoned to his own resources, must inevitably perish.

On the thirteenth, at six in the morning, we again put to sea. About noon, after we had doubled Capes Markâss and Kiwipet, a whispered consultation took place between the nacoda and roubban, which resulted in an addition to our rig of a standing jib, for the purpose of getting more way upon our bark. There seemed to be some mystery in the matter, but the nacoda only shook his head when I interrogated him, saying that the “old man,” as he called the roubban, had predicted a change of weather, and the near approach of the *asiep*.

The *asiep* sometimes blows without interruption for a week at a time, or even for a fortnight. Upon inquiring of the roubban how soon we might expect the coming of this dread wind, he turned toward the south, and, having scanned carefully every cloud in that quarter of the heavens, said that it would probably come down upon us in about two hours, and that, during its influence, further progress would be impossible.

About half-past two o'clock, in accordance with this pre-

diction, a heavy ripple began to come over the sea, not only impeding our progress, but even driving us back somewhat. Our mariners now made long tacks, in the hope of gaining some way, but soon the strife became a very unequal one, the wind rushing down upon us with frightful power.

When the first squall struck us, the women came out of their cabin and crowded upon the deck, screaming with all their might and spreading confusion everywhere, in the midst of which tumult the sailors ran to and fro upon a deck sloped like the roof of a house, with a celerity astonishing to us mere passengers, who had no small difficulty in simply keeping on our legs by clinging round the mast, or holding on to the rigging. Now and then the cry of *Asiep! Asiep!* rang through the turmoil. The sails were all furled, the standing jib was hauled down, and the vessel put head to wind.

And then the tempest came upon us in full force, whistling through the bare rigging and round the mast, while our bark danced like a nut-shell upon the wild billows. An hour of this, and it was plain that we could no longer withstand the force of the elements, for the sea broke continually over our bulwarks, and the hold had taken in so much water that the vessel was visibly sinking deeper and deeper. As a last resort, then, the pilot gave up the contest, and ran us under the lee of the little island of Hemr, before we reached which we had many miraculous escapes from foundering upon the coral reefs by which the approaches to it are beset.

Here we all went ashore in the small boat, and occupied ourselves in making arrangements to dry the soaked cargo. Our provisions were much damaged—none of our sea-stock, in fact, having escaped injury, except the fresh water.

By rigging up some sails we made tents ashore for the accommodation of the women and children, who had suffered terribly from sea-sickness. The men made themselves as comfortable as they could in the open air, with the aid of

pieces of carpet and matting, and, as the night was cold, we kindled great fires, around which we disposed ourselves to sleep toward morning—the unloading of the cargo having occupied us during the greater portion of the night.

The next day, the fourteenth of October, was employed in drying the merchandise by spreading it upon the beach or hanging it upon bushes.

On the fifteenth the *asiep* was still in full blow, the dull roar of the sea breaking over the rocks falling continually upon the ear—a sound full of awful poetry, particularly to those who are at the mercy of the elements; for to those ashore or at anchor the sentiment loses much of its force.

By way of killing time, some of us set out to explore the island.

El-Hemr is about four leagues long by a league and a half broad. It is uninhabited, and its soil is covered with a deposit of shells and strange skeletons of birds and fish. Occasionally, the coasting vessels put in there to refit, and the Bedouins of the neighboring shores for the purpose of obtaining coral—and these are almost its only visitors.

On the night of the sixteenth the wind abated somewhat, and the signs of the weather became more favorable for us, so that toward morning we once again got under way and coasted along a low, sandy shore until four o'clock in the afternoon, when some minarets appeared above the horizon. And soon the buildings to which they belonged loomed up, two large forts, which towered above all, announcing our approach to a town of some importance.

We were now scudding before a fair breeze, when the nacoda sang out to put the helm hard a starboard—a movement which the “Khethaêfa” obeyed promptly, and, sweeping round on a quarter of a circle, shot rapidly in between two rocky reefs on which the sea was breaking. The word to anchor was now given, the grapnels were thrown out, and we found ourselves fast in the bay of

Harmin, which lies in 20° north latitude by $50^{\circ} 34'$ east longitude.

Harmin is the chief town of a small province governed by a sultan, who is subject, however, to the Imam of Muscat. It is a large place, and contains a great number of mosques. Situated about half a league from the sea, it is surrounded with tracts of sterile sand; but, at some distance behind it, forests of date-palms are to be discerned, flourishing plantations, cattle, and small villages, the inhabitants of which, in former days, lived chiefly by piracy.

Its population amounts to from six to seven thousand, consisting of permanent residents of industrious and laborious habits.

Here I observed a *café* built with branches of trees and thatched with sea-weed, and a bazaar in which the Bedouins of the neighborhood sell fresh water, salt of a dazzling whiteness, dates, milk, sheep, goats, and fish.

These Bedouins, numbering some twenty-five or thirty thousand, live, like all we had met with along this coast since leaving Dhafâr, by provisioning vessels. They are a thin, meager, nervous race, with regular features, of rare expression and indicative of great energy. The upper classes wear white shirts and sandals of goat or camel leather; but the poorer people go nearly naked, wearing nothing, in fact, except a piece of stuff fastened round the loins and reaching scarcely to the knees. Their complexions are swarthy, and they rub themselves liberally with grease, as a preservative against the heat of the sun and the attacks of insects. They have long, black hair and beards, are said to be pagans, speak Arabic very imperfectly, and possess a peculiar language of their own, not understood by the Arabs.

In disposition, they are cruel, superstitious, and dishonest. Their weapons are the djembie, matchlock, and lance. When crews land upon their coast for the purpose of procuring fresh water, it is the etiquette among the Bedouins

to offer them one of these weapons as a token of welcome. Possessed of this talisman, the strangers can proceed into the country unmolested; but where the usage has been omitted by the natives, trouble may be expected from them—the least, perhaps, being an obligation to traffic with them for the indispensable water.

CHAPTER LXII.

FROM HARMIN TO MUSCAT.

EARLY on the morning of the seventeenth of October I awoke to the cries of the sailors, who were busily hoisting the sail to take advantage of the land breeze.

Hardly had we got outside the harbor, however, when we were again caught in a dead calm, which lasted for three hours, during which the “Khethaêfa” lay listlessly upon the glassy waters. Then we had another snatch of breeze; and, about sunset, our roubban brought us to anchor under the lee of Little Masséra—so called in distinction from Great Masséra, which lies opposite to it, at a distance of some leagues.

Little Masséra, according to our nacoda, sustains a population of about three hundred souls. There is no water on the island, the inhabitants being obliged to depend upon the mainland for a supply of that article, in the transport of which many boats are employed. Some of these people make money enough by the sale of fish and coral to enable them to engage in the coasting trade upon the Indian Ocean.

On the eighteenth we left this island on our starboard, doubling the point of Scheble and the capes called Djibsch and Serg, where the mountain region again commences;

and at night we anchored within view of the district of Alascharra, and at some distance from Djallan, a small village situated at the foot of the mountains of that name.

As we again set sail on the morning of the nineteenth, our nacoda told us that we were about to enter a very dangerous labyrinth of reefs—an announcement which caused the passengers to invoke the Prophet in whispered accents, praying for a safe passage through these obstacles. Our bark made her way slowly between the coralline masses—sterile mountains to the right, and rocks to seaward, forming our horizon. Here, too, we had another danger to contend with—that of the currents, the set of which varies according to the tide. And as the sea foamed and bellowed upon the ridges, while the keel of our vessel almost grazed the bed of awful rocks dimly revealed to us beneath the waters, these currents, rushing with great force between the headland of Rûs and Hubba, drove us rapidly toward the Challenger Shoal.

And now, again, tumult arose among the crew, for we were within half a cable's length of certain destruction. The passengers commended themselves to Heaven, and the nacoda and crew seemed as if paralyzed with terror, when a fine-looking negro, of herculean frame, suddenly grasped the rudder and brought the vessel up into the wind—a movement which saved us.

Once beyond the dangers of this labyrinth, we again followed our course, and came to anchor opposite Ras-Djinns, an hour before sun-set.

On the twentieth we doubled the headlands of Ras-el-Hâd, Miséra, Hagaï-Bender and Bender-Djarhâm—still navigating among rocks, though of a less dangerous character than those of yesterday. Toward evening we came in view of Soor, where the sailors made use of the reefs as mooring-posts, and brought our bark to at the entrance of the beautiful little bay of that sea-port.

This town is one of the most important on the coast be-

tween Mokallâh and Muscat. It is flanked by the mountains called Djebel-Soor, and surrounded by a high, massive wall of stone, mounted with towers and guns, and having two gates—one looking toward Muscat and the other seaward. The harbor, which is well sheltered from prevailing winds, affords good anchorage in five-fathom water. Among the buildings noticeable here, are many fine mosques surmounted by minarets, and the palace of the governor, who is nominated by the Imaum of Muscat. The houses are all of stone, one, two, and three stories high, and built with terraced roofs.

Owing to the sterile and mountainous character of the site of this town and of the district around it, the inhabitants are obliged to depend, for their provisions, on the Bedouins by whom the neighboring valleys are cultivated. They are supplied with water partly from numerous cisterns and partly by the people of the interior and mountain districts.

Of its population, which numbers about five thousand, about one hundred are Banians, by whom a monopoly of commerce is enjoyed. The rest of the Soorites are sailors and fishermen, occupied in the coasting trade of the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, and in procuring coral. They have a bad general reputation, being looked upon as deceitful, inhospitable, covetous and dishonest: and, although no longer professional pirates, they do not scruple, when the opportunity offers, to plunder such stray vessels as have not force enough to resist them, or those that happen to be wrecked upon their coast, the crews of which they generally put to death, so as to make all safe.

Informed of these matters, we kept good watch during the night, and on the twenty-first, at break of day, again got under way. About ten o'clock we doubled Kalhâat—the *Chalatu* of Marco Polo and *Calaiâti* of d'Anville. This small town, one of the most ancient of Oman, is situated at the commencement of the ridge of mountains called Djebel-

Hhûther. Its population, including that of the territory, amounts to about three thousand, chiefly engaged in agriculture, but much renowned as warriors, being Bedouins of the tribe of Ebné-Abû-Hassan, whom the Imams of Muscat have never thoroughly succeeded in subduing. Seen—as by us—from a distance of six miles out at sea, it presents a very picturesque aspect, appearing to be well sheltered by palm-trees : but, owing to the prevalence of mirage, it was not easy to take any exact observations of the topography of the place.

We were still some twenty leagues from Muscat, our approach to which important station, however, was announced by the increasing number of vessels which plowed their way past us, bound to the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea, and which, when of smaller size than our bark, took the initiative in hailing us with the holy greeting—*Salaam-A-Leikoom!* peace be with you!—at which every one on board our vessel would rise up, and, with hand on heart, or waving it in the air, would respond—*A-Leikoom-Salaam!* with you be peace!

For here, as elsewhere, the line that separates the great from the lowly must be respected, and our nacoda took care that the proper etiquette should be strictly observed : which reminds me that I should say a few words respecting this functionary—the skipper of the “Khethaêfa”—whom I have hitherto somewhat overlooked.

This man turned out to be better informed than—with that presumption so common to Europeans—I had at first considered him. When my eyes first alighted on him, as he sat upon the quarter-bench, he seemed to be troubled by no other cares than those of eating, drinking, smoking and sleeping ; but, as soon as we had lost sight of Mokallâh, he began to stir himself a little, producing a compass and proceeding to take observations. He also kept the log very regularly, noting, with exactness, the changes of wind, and carefully watching our course. Farther than this, he took

the meridian by means of a sextant, making the result of his calculations upon a map printed in English—a language with which he appeared to be well acquainted. When ashore, he wore a robe of red woolen stuff; a handsome cashmere shawl around his waist, to which was attached a poniard of rich, damaskeened manufacture, and a silken turban, striped with white and blue, one end of which passed under his chin and fell upon his left shoulder. But, when he came on board, all such superfluities were discarded; his costume then consisting of nothing but a nankeen shirt, made very tight at the wrists, striped like the turban and ornamented with silken braid. Like all the captains of these seas, he had with him a young Abyssinian slave, who acted as his secretary and companion.

About four o'clock, we passed the equatorial line at Ras-Heiran—but the usual diverting ceremony of baptizing the novices was here omitted, not being practiced by the Arabs.

A little before sunset our roubban descried the Isle of Fahhel, which lies opposite the port of Muscat, from which it is about a league distant. This news gave great satisfaction to all on board; but, as we neared Muscat, we were obliged to be more vigilant than ever, for the reefs everywhere showed their heads above water, as if to dispute our approach to that much longed-for town. Among these we steered, casting the lead as we went, until we arrived safely at the anchorage, after a voyage of fifteen days from Mokallâh, instead of ten as we had been led to expect.

Here we went ashore, some of us in the felucca, and others in the boats of the Muscatese, and, the necessary custom-house inspection over, all the passengers, men, women, and children, spread themselves through the town—some making their way to the caravansaries and mosques, others to the coffee-shops and baths.

As for myself, followed by Selim, and three or four negroes to carry my baggage, I went in quest of the dwelling

of Séïd-ben-Calfen, to whom, as already mentioned, I had an introduction from Hadji-Khacem. Arrived there, refreshments were at once offered to me, and an apartment—the latter of which I first availed myself of, repose being what I stood most in need of, after a fortnight of the sea beneath a scorching sun.

CHAPTER LXIII.

SÉID-BEN-CALFEN.—MUSCAT.—THE FLOWER-BOATS.—THE BAZAARS.

My host was a Muscatese, thirty-five or forty years of age, with a pleasant and intellectual expression of face. His garb consisted of a kind of fouta, cut in the form of trowsers and reaching to the instep; a linen shirt, over which he wore a djebba of muslin or silk; a cashmere shawl by way of girdle, into which was thrust the inevitable djembie, a blue-striped turban of the same material, and sandals of rich workmanship. On particular occasions he used to exchange his plain, every-day djebba for one of black cloth, braided with silk. This is the costume usually worn by the better class of people at Muscat.

He was formerly captain of a ship belonging to the Imaum Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan, with whose family he was distantly connected. This gave him an opportunity of visiting, from time to time, the East Indies, England, America and other countries, during his intercourse with which he had made himself master of the English, French, Dutch, and Spanish languages.

On his return to Muscat, he gave up nautical pursuits and devoted himself to business, discharging also the duties of American consul and French agent—by which pursuits he soon acquired a considerable fortune.

But, although professing the Mussulman faith, drink was

his besetting sin. He was seldom sober, in fact, and his morose, quarrelsome disposition when drunk rendered him insufferable as a companion—notwithstanding which, the influence enjoyed by him in consequence of his business relations was unlimited. For, in the East, commerce takes precedence of all other professions—public opinion exalting the merchant far above the warrior and the mariner, brave though the latter may be.

Séid-ben-Calfen, on the introduction given to me by Hadji-Khacem, had politely offered me his hospitality; but, at the same time, with that kind of distrustful air with which people are apt to receive a man suspected of being charged with a secret mission. And, from this preconceived opinion of me arose, probably, a certain coolness evinced by him toward me, notwithstanding his assumed politeness and offers of services—a coolness which, as we shall see by and by, turned presently into implacable animosity.

After breakfast my host left me to attend to his affairs, whilst I sallied forth to visit the town. To a stranger approaching it from seaward, the aspect of Muscat is at once strange and picturesque. It is nearly surrounded by steep hills, from the dark background of which the white and red houses and turrets of the town stand out in bold relief, giving it from a distance the appearance of a fine city. The bowered roofs of the houses have a charming effect as they cut sharply out against the blue morning sky: nor are they less pleasing to the eye at night, with their groups of veiled women picturesque in attitude and costume.

But the illusion is dispelled from the moment the traveler lands. In the narrow streets, as in the vast, covered bazaars, no traces of regularity or of neatness are visible: nothing meets the eye but a confused labyrinth of ill-constructed or unfinished buildings, with some few structures of a more important class—the Persian and Portuguese architecture of which is not to be observed in the other towns visited by me in these countries. These structures consist of a few

mosques without minarets, the palace of the governor, the dwellings appropriated to the members of his family and the chief officers of the state, the custom-house, leased by the Banians, and about one hundred private residences, from two to three stories high.

Muscat, nevertheless, in a commercial point of view, is not only the most important town of Oman, but of Arabia.

Situated at the foot of Mounts Kelbo and Darset, at the southern extremity of the Gulf of Oman, in $23^{\circ} 38'$ north latitude, by $56^{\circ} 20'$ east longitude, it serves as an *entrepôt* for all merchandise bound to India, China, and the Persian Gulf; so much so, in fact, that it is almost the only town of this coast recognized by Europeans—on which account they call the potentate who governs Oman the “Imaum of Muscat.” Its importance would date from many centuries back were we to identify it, as some geographers have done, with the ancient Mosca-Portus; but, whatever it might have been in times so remote, we can only trace its history from the epoch at which the Portuguese took possession of it in 1508, when they made use of it as a station for refitting their ships trading between India and Ormuz—with a view to which they expended much money in fortifying it and on sundry important works.

And then, when the Persians possessed themselves of Ormuz, during the reign of Shâh-Abbas, in 1622, the wealthier inhabitants of that island took refuge at Muscat, an event by which its importance was greatly enhanced.

But, in 1658, the Arabs having invested the place—the gates of which are said to have been opened to them either through the treachery of a Banian or by a Jew, whose daughter the Portuguese governor had seduced—put all the garrison to the sword, and at present there exist no traces of Portuguese occupation here, except the dilapidated fortifications and two churches, one of which has been converted into a custom-house, and the other into a palace for the Imaums, or, rather, for their deputies. Nevertheless,

these relics are remindful of a great historical epoch and a name radiant with glory—for that of Albuquerque will outlive the ruins of ages, imparting an undying interest not only to this nook of the earth, but to many places on the coasts of Africa, Persia, India, and China.

The harbor of Muscat is about sixteen hundred yards long by seven hundred and fifty broad. Its entrance is suggestive of the rugged character of the Muscatese, being inclosed on the east and west by basaltic rocks of sterile grimness, the native gloom of which is only enhanced by the dazzling brilliancy of the feldspar crystals with which they are flecked. I have seen no place, indeed, with the exception of St. Helena, by which the mind is more impressed with an idea of savage grandeur.

Seaward, the town is defended by these rocks, and by five forts, two of which are of lofty proportions, and stand at each extremity of it—the others, of smaller dimensions, being placed at intervals. The defense on the land side consists of the Portuguese wall, in which there are two gates leading to the country, and outside this, a ditch, with bridge and portecullis.

The environs of Muscat are well cultivated. Large plantations of palm and fruit-trees of every kind are there to be seen—the valley at the entrance of which the town stands being fertilized by a number of small streams running down from the mountains, and by the large water-course called Wadi-Muscat, which is fed by the rains of December, January, and February. Except during these three months, the climate is one of torrid fierceness—deadly to the European, sickly for the native.

Besides the stone buildings of the town, there are many *eschays*, or habitations of the lowest class and of the fluctuating population, which amount, perhaps, to about ten thousand souls.

The flower-boats form another feature of this place—structures which have neither masts nor oars, but are

simply wooden houses, built upon the floating hulls of boats. The external walls of these are trellises of palm-tree wood, of elegant pattern, and painted in gaudy colors, within which is another wall of close planks, as a protection against the too curious gaze of intruders. The rear of these dwellings is decked with numerous triangular flags of various colors; and over the vestibules, which open to the front, are arranged porcelain jars containing bouquets of rich flowers.

There are *danseuses* attached to these flower-boats—for the Muscatese are fond of diversion, and will have it whether by land or by water; and in these establishments, fitted up with more or less luxuriance, they lounge, smoke, drink coffee, play at backgammon, or amuse themselves with the dancing girls, according to their individual tastes.

With the exception of the baths and barbers' shops, the flower-boats are the resorts most frequented in the towns of these coasts, and, I will add, the most picturesque. At the lower end of each of them—as upon the old-time altars of Vesta—a perpetual fire of charcoal is maintained, which serves for preparing coffee and lighting the chiboques and narghilehs, the stems of which are ranged in order near the furnace, each smoker having one specially reserved for his use, just as our crack billiard players have their special cues. The fire is generally confided to the charge of a negro youth, whose morals, nevertheless, are not usually based upon purely Vestal principles.

All the Muscatese, young and old, married and single, frequent these establishments without restraint, entering them with as much indifference as we do a *café chantant*. To this license the Jews are the only exception.

Muscat has thirteen bazaars, ten within the town and three outside. These are all on a large scale and well stocked with a variety of native and foreign produce: stuffs of silk, wool, cotton, and camel's hair; blade-weapons of fine manufacture, such as Persian poniards, and those lances

from Nedjêd known by the name of *khathié*; peltry of various kinds; horses, camels, asses, oxen, sheep, and goats; millet, maize, wheat, dates, sugar-canes, honey, butter, and those rose-perfumes so much in vogue all through the Imaumate. Besides these are to be found India cashmeres, porcelain from China and Japan, spices from Zanzibar, Java, and Ceylon; stuffs of European manufacture, those of England being most prized; glassware from Venice, and many other such articles, too numerous to mention.

Having thus slightly sketched out the town of Muscat for my readers, I shall introduce them, in the next chapter, to some acquaintance with its inhabitants.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE MUSCATESE.—FAMILY JUSTICE.

As the Mussulmans are not in the habit of registering either births or deaths, it is impossible to obtain any thing nearer than an approximative estimate of the population of an Arab town or state.

It should be observed that in the desert, however, the exact number of matchlocks in the service of each douar is known, from which may be deduced the strength of the adult male population. But in large towns like Muscat, it is necessary, in order to arrive at any estimate, to enumerate the different elements of which the population is composed, computing from these the total.

Thus I found the intramural population of Muscat to consist of:

Arabs.....	13,000
Mussulman Hindoos.....	1,000
Parsees and Banians.....	2,000
Slaves, of sundry races.....	4,000
Jews.....	100
Total.....	20,100

In the times of the Portuguese and Persians the population amounted to double or treble this estimate.

The Arab element, although from the same stock as the Bedouins, has undergone much alteration from the primitive type, partly from the continuous influence of town life, and partly from the admixture of Persian blood. Nevertheless, they still display the physical attributes of the parent race, being for the most part tall, thin, sinewy, and muscular, and of brown or coppery complexion.

The costume already described by me as worn by Séid-ben-Calfen is that of the better class of Muscatese in general, except that they seldom wear the *sérouâl* or trowsers, preferring to go with the legs uncovered. When walking in the streets they always carry a silver-sheathed saber, which they handle in the manner of a walking-cane.

As for the inferior classes, Bedouins, sailors, negroes, and others, their only raiment consists of a shirt dyed with henna, and a blue-striped turban; and they carry lances instead of sabers.

The Muscatese, properly so called, as well as all the Arabs dwelling upon the coasts of Asia and Africa bordering upon the Indian Ocean, are *Beïâfis* or *Abadites*, while the Hindoo Mussulmans and slaves belong to the sect of Hanbal, one of the four orthodox Imaums of the Sonnites. These Abadites are descended from the ancient *Khouaridj*, the first schismatic Mussulmans, who were defeated in the famous battle of Narhwân, upon the borders of the Tigris, by Ali-ben-Abû-Taleb, the fourth Caliph of the Islam. They decline to acknowledge the supremacy of the descendants of the Prophet, holding that all Mussulmans, without distinction, have an equal right to honors, and to hold all manner of employments, civil, military, and religious. Hence the origin of the Imams of Muscat, who, however, although not descendants of the Prophet, assume the title of Caliph.

Although the use of strong liquors is forbidden to the Abadites, as to other Mussulman sects, they do not inva-

riably carry out the total abstinence principle, as was exemplified in the case of Séid-ben-Calfen, for instance. They are likewise enjoined to refrain from smoking and from drinking coffee, as well as from displaying any magnificence in their raiment, houses, and mosques.

With regard to the Parsees—called *Ghèbres* by the Persians and *Gaures* by the Turks—they form, together with the Banians, the most intelligent, honest, and industrious element of the population. Both of these races excel in all the handicraft trades, but more especially in the dyeing of silk; and they are also remarkable for their sagacity in commercial affairs. At Muscat, as in other Arab towns, every family has its business transactions regulated by a Banian, who, when he has made money enough by his employment, generally returns to pass the remainder of his life in his native Indies.

The Parsees, as is generally known, are a remnant of the ancient Persians—fire-worshippers, who, after the Mussulman contest, first took refuge at Guzzerat, and subsequently at Surat and Bombay, where they form a community of more than one hundred and fifty thousand souls. In an article upon “Algiers and the Colonies,” in the *Revue de l’Orient* for November, 1853, M. Auguste Dozon states as follows:

“At a party in London, in the month of June, 1853, I met two of these *Mages*, whose eastern origin was betrayed by their costume only; for, in cast of features and fairness of complexion—and this was particularly noticeable in one of them—they bore a striking similarity to the northern type.

“Their costume consisted of a long, narrow tunic of white cottonade, trowsers of the same stuff, and patent-leather boots, of European manufacture. But the most singular part of it was the headdress, which was apparently of pasteboard, and covered with paper of a pattern similar to those of oilcloth table-covers.

“I was introduced to these gentlemen, who, so far as I

could judge, spoke excellent English, not to mention Persian, Hindostanee, Mahratta, and Guzzerat, the latter being the language proper to the Parsees of Bombay.

“As one of them seemed disposed to enter upon the question of religious creeds, I asked permission to put a few queries to him on the subject, and thus obtained some information which appears to me not to be devoid of interest, and which I shall endeavor here to reproduce just as it was given to me.

“They assured me, and that with evident eagerness, that the Parsees were never *worshippers* of fire, simply recognizing in it the emblem of a supreme and only Deity. In reply to my direct question as to what are the religious dogmas inculcated upon their children, they told me as follows:

“1. There is but one God. 2. Zoroaster is his Prophet. 3. The soul is immortal. 4. After this life there are rewards and punishments; but, finally, all the beings of creation, having been purified by fire, shall enjoy eternal happiness after the resurrection of the body.”

The reforms of Zoroaster referred chiefly to forms of worship, to the liturgy, the purifications, the civil and moral law, the clean and unclean animals, and, finally, to points of discipline. A good many of his ideas on these subjects have evidently been borrowed from the Bible.

It is to be remarked, however, that in his dispensations, fasting, instead of being looked on as meritorious, is forbidden. The Parsee is enjoined to nourish himself, on the principle that a vigorous body renders the mind the stronger to withstand temptation; and that he who feels no want reads all the more attentively the Zend-Avesta, or holy word, and has a better spirit for good works.

Ablutions are prescribed by the law of Zoroaster; also payment of the tithe, respect toward the Mages, the practice of prayer and alms; the destruction of noxious beasts, reptiles, and insects; hatred of vice, and, above all, of lying—

which is held as being one of the greatest sins of which man can be guilty.

Marriage is a duty among the Parsees. Their funeral ceremonies are the same at the present day as they were in ancient times. At Surat and Bombay they expose their dead upon platforms elevated on round turrets about twelve feet high, situated outside the town and at a distance from any habitation—to which hideous dead-houses the birds of prey flock in great numbers and tear the flesh from the skeletons, which are then thrown into a kind of well opening in the center of the platform. The bodies of persons of rank, however, are not thus exposed, but are entombed in sepulchers excavated in the rock. The practice of interment is forbidden, for the Parsees hold that it is a great crime to sully the earth—for which they profess a profound veneration—by making it the receptacle for the dead bodies of either man or beast.

To trace the origin of the Banians, it is necessary to go back to that of the Hindoo religion—a religion of which adoration of the powers of Nature was the first principle. The more ancient hymns of the Vedas, or sacred writings, contain nothing, in fact, but invocations in honor of the sun, the fire, the water, and the other elements of nature, the action of which has great influence upon man not yet arrived at a high degree of civilization. It was only at a later period of his progress that these agents were personified, originating a vast Pantheon, of which the leading spirits are Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu.

And out of this very nature-worship there developed itself, from times the most remote, a worship more pure—a religion abstract and metaphysical.

“Para-Brahma, or the superior spirit, is the Eternal, the sovereign Being, revealed in happiness and in joy.

“The world is his name, his image.

“All phenomena have their cause in Para-Brahma.

As for him, he is limited neither by time nor space.

“He is the spirit of the world, as he is the spirit of each individual in particular.

“This universe is Para-Brahma; it came from Para-Brahma, it exists in Para-Brahma, and it will return unto Para-Brahma.”

By the above extract from the Vedas, some idea may be formed as to the high degree of abstraction attained by this pantheistic theology. In it all is referred to unity; from which emanate, as from a common source, nature and all its phenomena. Or rather it is this unity which, developing and manifesting itself in time and space, produces, vivifies, and destroys—to be again produced—the universe and all the beings by which it is peopled.

Para-Brahma first revealed himself as Brahma; then as Vishnu, and finally as Shiva.

Brahma is power, creation, matter. He represents the past, and the sun is his emblem.

Vishnu is wisdom, conservative force, space—representing the present, and typified by water.

Shiva is fire, or the destroyer—or rather the reviver of the forms of matter. He modifies, in fact, creating through the agency of death—dissolving and killing to regenerate; in which respect he represents time, or futurity. He is also the god of justice.

These three gods, originating from Para-Brahma, constitute the Trinity—or *Trimourti*—of the Hindoos. And each of these male divinities allied himself to a divinity of the other sex, from which unions sprang a numerous posterity.

Thus, for example, Brahma became the material parent of all beings, by procreating seven personages who assisted him in the creation of the world; while Vishnu and Shiva, having espoused Legmi and Parwâti, became parents of innumerable children, or incarnations, who, in their several developments, became new personifications of the ideas represented by these four divinities.

The incarnations of Vishnu, among others, occupy a large

space in the sacred writings of the Hindoos, in which the embodiment, or incarnation of a divinity is designated by the term *Avatar*. He has already undergone nine *Avatars*, and is yet to appear in a tenth.

The first four of these took place in the primary stage of the world—the *Sati-Youga*, or golden age. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth in the second and third ages—the one called silver and the other iron; and the tenth is to terminate the present period—the *Kali-Youga*, or black age—and will put an end to the existence of the world. In that incarnation Vishnu is to appear as Kalki, the annihilating steed, who, with one kick of his hoof, will reduce the globe to dust.

This divinity is represented as reclining upon the great serpent Ananta, who is extended beneath him as a couch, supporting his seven heads. In other instances he is enthroned upon a hawk or eagle; but, in all, youth and vigor are his obvious characteristics. He has four arms and four hands; in one of which he holds a club, in another a disk or symbolical wheel, in the third a lotus, and in the fourth a conch shell; and his head is adorned with a magnificent crown.

Vishnu has his worshipers in all parts of India, but more particularly at Juggernaut, where fanatics will even now throw themselves under the wheels of the car in which his image is borne.

The Shivaïtes, or worshipers of Shiva, regard that divinity as the greatest of all: at one time, indeed, in the south of Hindostan and in Ceylon, he was looked upon as the supreme and only deity. He took upon himself successively the forms of the elephant and the cock, and became, by Parwâti, parent of Genesa and Ganga. Shiva is represented sometimes as mounted on the bull Nandi, provided with five heads, and holding in his hands the trident, the padma, the dwarf deer, and the tchakra. At other times he appears riding on an immense tiger, his mouth armed with hooked

teeth, his arms and waist entwined with serpents, and his neck encircled with a collar of human skulls.

The population of Hindostan is divided into four principal castes. The Brahmas, or nobles; the Shattryas, or warriors; the Banians, who are merchants and cultivators of the soil, and are also known by the name of Waiṣhyas; and the Soudras, men employed in servile occupations. Of these castes, the first three only are allowed to study the Vedas. They are forbidden to intermarry with the Soudras; and, where such a union does take place, the progeny is looked upon as unclean. From such progeny has originated the proscribed race called *Tchandallas* or *Parias*, with which were incorporated, from time to time, all those who from whatever cause had been excommunicated from their castes.

But it is of the Banians only that I have here to treat. The costume of the caste consists of a fouta of white cotton, a mantle of the same stuff thrown over the shoulders, and a sort of bonnet of silk, embroidered with gold thread. The turban is not usually worn by them. Their arms and legs are naked; their shoes of red morocco leather, high heeled, richly embroidered, and cut with a peak over the instep.

With regard to the slave population of Muscat, the figures given by me above go to prove that, in spite of all the obstacles continually cast in the way of the slave-trade by the negrophilists, it is still carried on to a great extent in these countries. The principal districts and towns from which the Muscatese obtain their slaves are: Baghermy, Kordofan, Dârfour, the country of the Shangallas, Zanguibar, Nubia, Mozambique, Abyssinia, Quiloa, Melinda, Magadoxo, and the country of the Saumalis, on the coast of the Red Sea, opposite Aden.

Of the slaves from these countries, the finest women are to be found among the Nubians, Abyssinians, and Saumalians—the last two reminding us of the ancient Egyptian

type, the primitive race of the time of the *Hycsos*, or shepherd kings. They are of an olive or yellowish complexion—sometimes almost white—with large, languishing eyes, hair woven into small plaits, and small hands and feet.

The Nubian women are also handsome, but their beauty is of another style. They are tall and well formed, with slender waists—ebony Dianas, in fact: but they do not usually command such high prices as the Abyssinian and Saumalian nymphs.

Slave women of white race—Circassians and Georgians—are considered of a value beyond price.

The Jews of Muscat, who, as at Mokallâh, form a very insignificant item of the population, devote themselves chiefly to trading in opium and dye-stuffs. Most of the Jewesses are *blondes*, and many of them very handsome. They marry at a very early age; and, once having entered upon matrimonial life, they are released from the restriction which obliges the young, unmarried girls to remain within doors, except on very extraordinary occasions—on which their parents take the utmost care to veil them from vulgar eyes. This kind of restraint results, as a matter of course, in a fondness for intrigue. But, among the Jews, such matters are usually hushed up, and the guilty parties brought to justice by way of matrimony.

With the Mussulmans, such matters are taken more seriously. The intrigue is generally revealed by some spiteful negro or eunuch belonging to the family; and, when the evidence is conclusive, the father and brother of the imprudent one take upon themselves the exaction of the penalty. The girl dies by her brother's hand, her paramour by that of her father.

And then, at nightfall, the two bodies are sewn up in a sack and placed upon an ass, which is led by the informer to some lonely spot on the sea shore, where, from an overhanging rock, the ghastly burthen is plunged into the swallowing waters.

If the stranger who chances to wander through the streets of Muscat in the gloomy twilight, happens to observe a negro leading an ass bending under a heavy burden, let him avert his gaze from the sad procession. For there has been trouble in some family, and justice has grasped its victims.

CHAPTER LXV.

OMAN AND THE IMAUMATE OF MUSCAT.

HAVING made my readers in some degree acquainted with Muscat, I shall now give a brief account of Oman, a country which comprises that part of Arabia of which the shores are washed by the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

The boundaries of this territory are as difficult to determine as those of the countries already described by me. Europeans comprehend under the name of Oman all the region lying between Hadramaut, Lasha, and Nedjêd, from Cape Sangra, $18^{\circ} 9'$, to Cape Mussendom,* $26^{\circ} 25'$ north latitude, where it terminates with a sharp angle. This division, however, is altogether unknown to the natives, who consider Oman as the space comprised between the districts of Jaïlan and Batna.

By taking the average of these several opinions, it seems to me that Oman comprehends all that tract of country which differs in its essential characteristics from the neigh-

* The trading vessels of these waters, when passing Cape Mussendom on their way to the Persian Gulf, throw cocoa-nuts, flowers and fruits into the sea, to secure a prosperous voyage. Sometimes they rig out a tiny felucca, in which they put samples of all the articles of which the cargo is composed, and then send it adrift to the mercy of the wind and waves—auguring a safe voyage if it happens to be carried towards land. These miniature barks are often picked up many leagues out at sea.

boring regions, and the subdivisions of which are subject, more or less, to the government of the prince who bears the title of Sovereign of Oman—in other words, the Imaum of Muscat. Considered from this point of view, the territory in question forms a strip of land not exceeding seventy-five leagues in its extreme breadth, bounded on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the west by vast deserts, and extending from the country of Scheble, 21° north latitude, to De-baï, $25^{\circ} 15'$.

The Arabs divide Oman into four main districts—Jaïlan, Oman, Dhorrah, and Batua. A chain of granitic mountains—six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and forming part of the great chain by which Arabia is bounded—traverses it in a direction parallel with the coast: and, five leagues to the west of Muscat another chain, of still greater elevation, runs transversely across it, at right angles with the former. This latter is called Djebel-Akhdar, or the Green Mountain, and some of its peaks attain, like those of Djebel-Quemâr, in Hadramaut, a height of eight thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The general aspect of this country is that of a vast solitude, interspersed with numerous oases and fertile valleys, watered by four principal streams—two of which, the Masora and the Fel-Hadj, flow perennially; the others, at Muscat and Sohar, only during the rainy season. The cultivated lands, however, form a very small area in proportion to the immense tracts of sandy, sterile desert.

In the narrow band of country extending from Ras-el-Hâd on the sea coast to the foot of the mountains, great numbers of palm-trees are produced. Between Sib and Khorfakân these trees form a regular forest, about sixty-five leagues long, by from one to two in width. Hence the Arab poets make frequent allusion to the palm-trees of Oman.

Wheat is also much grown in this tract, as are barley, maize, millet, lentils, beans, sugar-canes, and many kinds of fruit-trees—among others the vine, which furnishes three

varieties of excellent grapes, considerable quantities of which are exported.

Fish are so plentiful along this coast, that they are used as food for cattle and manure for the land. The shark is particularly abundant, and is eaten, both fresh and salt, by seafaring people, some of whom take with them on their voyages a stock of it, dried in the sun like ling.

With regard to the geology of the mountains here, I observed that calcareous rock forms their distinctive feature. Those immediately around Muscat, some of which attain an elevation of five thousand feet, are composed of strata of micaceous and slaty schist; many of them—Djebel-Darset, for instance—containing mines of galena and copper. One of these copper mines, situated near Chobra, is worked by the Arabs.

Near Cape Muessendom the formation exhibits grand masses of basaltic rock and feldspar, rich in deposits of guano. Some of these rocks extend out into the sea, where they form abrupt promontories. About one day's journey southwest from Muscat there is a hot mineral spring of high temperature, the water of which is found to be an efficacious remedy for many morbid and cutaneous diseases.

The fauna of the Oman territory includes lions, leopards, panthers, hyenas, jackals, and wild boars—animals which rarely stray far from their savage haunts except when compelled by hunger. When thus pressed—which seldom happens except in the rainy season—they descend upon the valleys in search of prey, spreading consternation among those who dwell near the forests, who keep up large fires at night to scare away their unwelcome visitors.

Serpents of many kinds abound in this country, which swarms also with tarantulas and scorpions.

In traversing the mountain regions, I have occasionally seen eagles of enormous size, which are only to be met with in those all but inaccessible places where the great rocks on

which they perch seem as if suspended in air, ready to topple down at any moment upon the adventurous traveler.

As for the fleas, bugs, musquitoes, and such small vermin, I avail myself of my privilege as a European to allude to the existence of such things. For, in so little account are these insects held here, that the time devoted by them to the natives appears to me to be entirely thrown away.

Oman is divided into a great number of districts, some of which—Kerboura, for instance—contain as many as a thousand villages and douars. These districts are under the rule of governors appointed by the Imaum, to whose family they are usually in some way allied, and all of whom are subject to the jurisdiction of the *Wali-Kébir*, or Governor-General, who resides at Muscat.

Two leagues to the southwest of Debaï commences Beléd-el-Sêr, or the country of Sêr, which extends from thence along the Persian Gulf, to Lahsa or *Bahreïn*. This country is so called by the Arabs from Sêr, its principal town, situated $24^{\circ} 20'$ north latitude by $48^{\circ} 58'$ east longitude—a town possessing, like Muscat, a harbor well sheltered from all points. To the Persians the region is known as Dsjulfâr, from the cape of that name.

In former times, the Arabs of Dsjulfâr were redoubtable pirates; but they were reduced to submission, in 1820, by the combined forces of Great Britain and of the Imaum of Muscat, under the command of Sir William Grant Keir—and, at the present day, they are tributaries of the Imaum.

In 1809, the fleet of these Arabs consisted of one hundred *trankis*—small vessels of great beam in proportion to their length, low before and high in the stern, and rigged with sails made of matting. With these craft they became the terror of the Persian Gulf, attacking all ships that came in their track, without regard to flag. They used to commence their attacks with stones; and the first thing done by them on boarding a vessel, was to sprinkle water on it by way of purification. This done, they led the crew out,

one by one, to the gangway, where, uttering the usual *Allah akhbar!*—Allah is great!—they beheaded them in turn, sealing each execution with the words *la ilah illa Allah!*—there is no other God but Allah!

Here, then, terminates my general description of Oman; but I have still some mention to make of the late Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan, by whom the country was governed at the time of my visit.

Before doing so, however, I must retrace the history of his predecessors from 1658—that is, from the time of the Imaum Ben-Melêch, the same who, with his Arabs, invested Muscat and put the Portuguese garrison to the sword: to render which as truthfully as possible, my next chapter shall be a quotation in full from Niebuhr—the father of modern travelers and an authority beyond question.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE IMAUMS OF MUSCAT, FROM 1658 TO THE REIGN OF SÉÏD-SÉÏD-EBNÉ-SULTAN.

“At this epoch,” says Niebuhr, referring to 1658, “Oman, from Ras-el-Hâd to Dsjulfâr, was under the dominion of the Imaum, Sultan-ben-Melêch-ben-el-Arrab-ben-Goâd-ben-Murschêd-el-Arrabi, who subsequently took possession of Bahreïn and the five small islands of Kunk; while his son, Seïf-ben-Sultan, seized upon Querimba, Quiloa, and Zanzibar, on the coast of Africa.

“During the reign of Ben-Seïf-ben-Sultan, his grandson, twelve thousand Persians marched upon Muscat, to besiege it, but they lost so many of their people in crossing the mountains, that they were obliged to retire.

“Upon the death of Ben-Seïf-ben-Sultan, a chief from

Gabrin, by the name of Mohammed-ben-Nassr-el-Gafâri, got possession of nearly the whole of Oman, assuming the title of Imaum. But his son, Nassr-ben-Mohammed, failed in sustaining the title, for Seïf-ben-Sultan, son of the preceding Imam, supplanted him, and Nassr was reduced to the condition of a simple Sheik of the Gabrin territory.

"This prince, called by the Arabs Seïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi-el-Koreïshi-el-Asdi, was of a voluptuous temperament—so that, although his harem was well provided with Mohammedan and Pagan damsels, yet the daughters of his subjects were not safe from his pursuit. Not only did he drink coffee, also, and smoke tobacco—indulgences forbidden to the Beïâfis—but he even abandoned himself to the use of wine and spirituous liquors.

"Troubling himself but little about the affairs of his government, he kept up an insufficient army; most of the soldiers composing which were African slaves, who were allowed to harass the people with impunity, even in their very houses. In a word, his conduct rendered him hateful to his subjects, so that it was no difficult matter for his cousin, Sultan-ben-Murschêd, to supplant him and take possession of nearly all the country.

"Upon this, Seïf-ben Sultan-el-Arrabi threw himself into Muscat, where he had four large ships of war with a number of smaller ones. Here he distributed his African troops; some of whom he stationed in the town, the others in the two citadels of Mêrâni and Djélâli.

"Sultan-ben-Murschêd, who had possession of all the coast excepting Muscat, could not drive the fugitives from that town. For, although he could prevent commerce from being carried on by land, he could not interfere with the foreign traders who brought their merchandise thither and loaded their ships with produce of the country in exchange—so that the rights of entering and leaving the port yielded a considerable revenue in themselves. Seeing this, and failing with all his forces to reduce his enemy to sub-

mission, he bethought him of making the neighboring town of Matrâh a commercial port, thereby to ruin the traffic of Muscat.

“With this view, he fixed the harbor dues of that port at half the amount payable at Muscat—by which policy he destroyed the commerce of the latter place and built up that of Matrâh.

“Further, he won over to his side one of the chief naval officers of the Imaum, who came over to him with his ship—possessing himself, also, by means of stratagem, of two other large vessels, homeward bound from Africa, with cargoes of slaves and elephants’ teeth.

“While this was going on, Seïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi continued to lead the same kind of life as hitherto, rendering himself daily more intolerable to the Muscatese. At last, when his resources were exhausted, leaving strong garrisons in Muscat and in the two fortresses, he sailed for Persia with his ships of war, where he obtained from the reigning sovereign, Nadir-Shâh, a fleet of twenty-four vessels commanded by Tacki-Khan, with which he returned to Oman.

“On the arrival of this fleet before Muscat, the Persians were allowed to enter the town, but excluded from the fortresses, into which Tacki-Khan made believe that he had no desire to penetrate, inasmuch as he had been sent to subdue Oman, not in the name of his sovereign, but in that of Zeïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi. The latter, however, was prevailed on to invite Tacki-Khan and a few of his followers to an entertainment in Fort Djélâli.

“The Persian, knowing how fond his host was of drink, brought with him a good stock of the wine of Schiraz, on which Seïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi and his chief officers soon got so drunk that Tacki-Khan had no difficulty in taking possession of the fortress.

“To gain the other fort, called Fort MÉRÂNI, which is situated to the west of the harbor, and to save bloodshed, he then wrote, in the name of the Imaum, an order to the

principal officers of that citadel to come to Fort Djélâli, sealing the document with the Imaum's signet ring, which he took from his finger as he lay in drunken sleep. They came to the order, and as soon as Tacki-Khan had them in his power, he sent the Persian troops to attack the fort, the garrison of which, destitute of leaders, was obliged to surrender.

"When Seïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi awoke he saw, but too late, the mistake committed by him. Nothing was left for him now, therefore, but to instigate his false friends to the pursuit of his principal enemy, Sultan-ben-Murschêd, who had retreated upon Sohar, which he hoped to maintain with the assistance of the governor, Ahmed-ben-Seïd. An attack was made upon him accordingly, and although a great number of Persians fell in the first engagement, the survivors did not yield.

"In the skirmishes that followed, several near relatives of Sultan-ben-Murschêd were killed, which so exasperated him that he threw himself into the midst of the enemy, where he received a gun-shot wound of which he died a few days after.

"Seïf-ben-Sultan-el-Arrabi, thus reduced by the Persians, also died about the same time, at Rostack—heart-broken, it was supposed, at his having brought such misfortunes upon himself and his subjects.

"After the death of the two Imaums, Ahmed-ben-Seïd, the governor of Sohar, thought that the best way to deal with such redoubtable foes as the Persians would be to make peace with them. He conducted himself so well that they appointed him to the government of Burka, as well as Sohar.

"Subsequently, Tacki-Khan appointed three commandants to Muscat, one for each fort, and one for the town, after which he returned to Persia with his fleet.

"After his departure, Ahmed-ben-Seïd, who had taken up his residence at Burka, allowed the pay of the occupying

troops to run into arrearage, which caused a diminution in their numbers.

“A chieftain by the name of Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiar, the Sheik of the territory of Sêr, whose name was Mattar, and a prince of the family of the deceased Sultan-ben-Murschêd, had divided among them all that remained of the possessions of that Imaum.

“Ahmed-ben-Séïd, having gained the confidence of the three Persian governors of Muscat, invited them to come to Burka, in order to confer with him as to financial affairs. They came accordingly, with an escort of one hundred and fifty men, bringing tents with them, so that their conference with the Arab chief might be in the open country—a precaution at which the latter did not appear to take offense.

“Seeing how he conducted himself, and having no longer any doubt as to his sincerity, they agreed to dine with him in the citadel, and to confer afterwards in their tents, upon the business in hand. But during the repast Ahmed-ben-Séïd retired on a pretext of illness, closed the door after him, and, summoning his armed followers, caused the three Persians to be disarmed and put in irons. There was no difficulty in securing their hundred and fifty followers, who were scattered through the town.

“Word was now sent to the troops occupying Muscat and its two fortresses that if they surrendered at discretion a certain sum of money should be distributed among them, otherwise that they should be taken and treated as slaves. Being in great destitution, most of them surrendered—some of whom Ahmed-ben-Séïd beheaded, setting the others at liberty and sending them back to Persia.

“Having thus made himself master of all the coast from Sohar to Muscat, he aspired to the title of Imaum, although that had already been assumed by Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiâr.

“With this object he gained over to his side the chief of the Cadis—an officer nearly equivalent, in Oman, to the

Mufti of Turkish towns. This person, at a public meeting, propounded the question, 'Whether he who had delivered his country from the yoke of the Persians was not worthy to govern it?'

"The decision was affirmative, as may readily be believed, whereupon the Cadi made an oration, in which he exalted the valor and virtues of Ahmed-ben-Séïd, proclaimed him Imaum of Oman, and declared his allegiance to him. His example was followed by the other chiefs. Drums were beaten through the town, and a proclamation was made in the streets, announcing that Ahmed-ben-Séïd-ben-Ahmed-ben-Mohammed-el-Saïdi had been chosen Imam, and that all were bound to recognize him as such.

"As soon as Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiâr was apprised of this, he marched with his troops against his rival, who, unprepared as yet, and finding all communication with Muscat cut off, threw himself, with a few followers, into Affi, a small fortress built upon a mountain, whither he had already sent all his treasures.

"Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiâr, who had from four to five thousand men in marching order, invested this fortress, and might have reduced the newly-proclaimed Imaum to surrender had not the latter made his escape, and found means to raise a small army.

"Ahmed-ben-Séïd, in fact, had walked out of the citadel in disguise with two of his servants; and the three, habited like Arab mendicants, made their way toward Sohar, which is distant a day's journey from Afi. Having been governor of that town for many years, in the course of which he had gained the good-will of the inhabitants, he found no difficulty in getting together some hundreds of men, with whom he advanced upon the foe, who had pitched his camp among some high mountains not far from Afi.

"Causing his soldiers to wear round the head a cord band of peculiar color, to distinguish them from their enemies, he sent forward several small detachments of them to take pos-

session of the mountain passes. Each of these detachments was furnished with an Arab trumpet, with which an alarm was to be sounded upon a given signal from the main body.

"These arrangements made, the signal was given at break of day by a son of Ahmed-ben-Séïd, and soon the trumpets were heard ringing out in every direction.

"Struck with panic, finding all the passes guarded, and calculating the number of their enemies by the extent of the noise, the whole army of Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiâr was thrown into confusion. That chief himself marched, with some of his troops, upon the pass guarded by the son of Ahmed-ben-Séïd, whom he recognized and shot, cutting off his head, according to Arab custom, and sending it in triumph to his father.

"The army of Bel-Arrab-ben-Hamiâr was soon dispersed, and Ahmed-ben-Séïd remained at last master of the country."

This chief was a native of Adem, a small town of the district of Senêd. He died in 1765, after a happy reign of sixteen years, regretted by his subjects, and leaving three legitimate sons, Sahrân, Hallâl, and Séïd, the latter of whom succeeded him, and was the father of Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan, Imam of Muscat at the time of my visit, and who died at Zanzibar in the beginning of the year 1857.

CHAPTER LXVII.

SÉID-SÉÏD-EBNÉ-SULTAN.—AFRICAN POSSESSIONS OF THE IMAUMATE.
—FUTURE OF MUSCAT.—SÉÏD-MEDJÊD.—SUNDRY POSSESSIONS.

THE Imaum Séid-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan was born at Rostack toward the close of the last century. He was probably sixty-six years old at the time of his death—I say *probably*, because your true Mussulman never knows his exact age, calculating it by events.

The Imaum counted his from the accession of Aga-Mohammed-Khan to the throne of Persia, which was in 1796. He was then about eight years old.

It was about the close of the year 1845 that I first saw this potentate, who received me with a kindly welcome, and even held out liberal inducements to me to enter his service, which, however, the state of my health at the time prevented me from accepting. He was then a fine-looking old man, of dignified carriage, affable, engaging manners, and a generosity that led him to anticipate the wants of the needy, to whom his purse was always open to an extent beyond what they required.

His revenues exceeded one hundred millions of francs. In favorable seasons the harvest of cloves alone used to bring him in more than two thousand thalers, or ten thousand francs, per day. Besides this he enjoyed a monopoly of ivory and gum-copal, to which latter he attached particular importance, making a special reservation of it in all his treaties with the nations of Europe and the United States.

The island of Zanzibar formed part of his possessions, furnishing him with much produce. But it was from the custom revenues of his dominions in general—rented by certain wealthy Banians—that he derived the bulk of his

income, which was gradually increasing by an extended commerce with India, the countries bordering upon the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and China.

His mercantile marine consisted of forty large vessels, so built as to be readily fitted out as ships of war in case of emergency. The peace establishment of his army numbered about twenty thousand men, Arabs, negroes, and Belooches; while, in case of war, he could readily have brought two hundred thousand warriors into the field.

Séid-Séid-Ebné-Sultan had five legitimate sons, the youngest of whom, Sidi-Hallâl, took up arms openly against his father in 1848. His rebellion, however, was unsuccessful; and, in order to withdraw from the reach of the paternal resentment, he undertook a pretended pilgrimage to Mecca; but, once beyond the dominions of Muscat, he shaped his course suddenly for Aden, with the object of putting himself under the protection of the flag of Great Britain, which nation was cognizant of his revolt. Some time afterward, however, he was again restored to grace; but he brought with him to Zanzibar a spirit imbued with the political principles of England, to forward which he was now ready to become an agent.

Séid-Séid-Ebné-Sultan had four legitimate wives, besides many concubines, nearly all of whom had borne him children. Of his wives, the one to whom he was most attached was a French creole, purchased by him from her husband, a European, by some stated to be an Englishman, by others a Frenchman. But the bargain was not negotiated without difficulty—for the right feeling of the Imaum forbade him from accepting the proposals made to him on the subject. He saw in the young creole a free woman, wife also to a Christian; and, notwithstanding that he was dazzled by her remarkable beauty, he would not consent to purchase her from her husband.

This nobility of sentiment, however, was but little appreciated by the European. His fortune had been all squan-

dered, and his object was to set himself up again, by an expedient which affected him, at least, with no scruples. While the Imaum was still undecided, then, this avaricious husband hit upon a sort of *mezzo-termine*, whereby to overcome the objections of the prince and gain his own object.

Aware that any foreign woman who once sets foot in the harem of the sovereign can not go forth from it again, he bribed one of the eunuchs to decoy his young creole wife across the terrible threshold of that institution. Thus had Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan the obligation forced upon him. Possibly he was not very much dissatisfied with the stratagem: but, at all events, he paid over to the European the price demanded by him for his wife, which was only thirty thousand thalers, or one hundred and fifty thousand francs.

This young creature was a native of the Isle of Bourbon, and of French descent. She was but twenty years of age at the time of her purchase by the Imaum, who soon became extremely attached to her—and this accounts for the predilection always manifested by him for the isle of her birth.

Two sons—the second and fourth of his legitimate ones—were borne to him of this romantic union, the influence of which on his after life was considerable. It was from his relations with Zulima—the Arab name bestowed upon the young creole—that he imbibed the basis of his treaty of friendship and commerce with France.

Of all the Arab sovereigns, Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan was the only one who succeeded in shaking off the yoke of the invading Wahabytes—which, however, he could never have accomplished without the assistance of England—the same power which, after the extermination, in 1820, of the pirates at that time infesting the Persian Gulf, aided him in reducing to submission the revolted Béni-Ali and Béni-Hassan. This was in 1821.

The services thus rendered by the English to Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan, gave them certain claims upon his gratitude, which they were not likely to leave in a state of political

fallow. To extricate himself, then, from the contingent exigencies foreseen by him, as well as on account of the delicate health of the young French creole, his favorite Sultana, he abandoned Oman as a residence, leaving the government of the country in charge of his eldest son, Séïd-Thuvéni, and removed to Zanzibar—a delicious retreat, at a safer distance from British influence.

This island, $6^{\circ} 9' 30''$ south latitude, by $36^{\circ} 54' 30''$ east longitude, contains about five hundred thousand inhabitants—comprising Arabs, free negroes, negro slaves, Banians, and Europeans. The climate, although not exactly salubrious for the latter, is quite endurable for those who consent to adopt altogether the Arab mode of living. The most luxuriant vegetation everywhere charms the eye. Many varieties of fruits are produced without culture, such as mangoes, oranges, cocoa-nuts, ananas, papaws, lemons, citrons, bananas, and sweet potatoes.

The island is watered by one river only, upon the banks of which Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan caused his summer palace to be built—other residences being maintained by him in the interior, near his sugar refineries and clove districts. There are no fierce or noxious animals in the country, which would be a perfect paradise indeed but for its hosts of troublesome insects.

Savoyel, situated upon a tolerably commodious harbor, is the only town of any importance in Zanzibar. There are many flourishing villages, however, inhabited by negroes who till the soil for their masters, and are metamorphosed into sailors and soldiers when their services are thus required.

To the north and south of Zanzibar are situated the islands of Pemba, Monfiâh, and Latham, or Shoâl. The first of these is low, based upon a coral reef, and very fertile—producing abundance of rice of excellent quality. Monfiâh and Shoâl are likewise of coralline formation—the latter accessible from the southwest only, and its flat surface com-

posed altogether of the guano deposited by the myriads of birds which there find a retreat.

Next to these come the islands of Quiloa and Querimba, which were, previous to Zanzibar, the two principal maritime establishments of the Imaums of Muscat. Francisco d'Almeida possessed himself of these islands in 1505, erecting upon them several forts, which, at the present day, are garrisoned by Arab troops—for, about sixty years since, the islands reverted to the Imaumate of Muscat. Their towns are in a ruinous condition, but the harbors on which they are situated the best along this coast. Wild beasts of several kinds, including rhinoceroses and elephants, abound in their forests.

Northward from Pemba lies Mombaza, which bears traces of having been formerly a place of some importance. The ruins and inscriptions to be observed here bear testimony to the ancient dominion of the Portuguese, in the time of Almeida. The town is at present divided into two quarters—one occupied by the Arabs, the other by the negroes. It is situated upon a high rock, almost surrounded by the sea, and its harbor defended by a well garrisoned fortress, furnished with all sorts of munitions of war. The soil of this island is fertile, producing many kinds of fruits and vegetables. It abounds in cattle, and is blessed with good water, a temperate climate, and healthful air.

Beyond Mombaza, and still toward the north, lie Melinda, Patté, Lamou, Brava, and Magadoxo. When repulsed by the Mombazians, Vasco de Gama was received with welcome by the inhabitants of Melinda on his return from India in February, 1499; and still, upon a steep rock jutting out into the sea at that place, is to be seen a column bearing on its summit the arms of the kings of Portugal and Melinda. The territory which anciently formed the kingdom of Melinda is now occupied by the Gallas—a tribe by which the navigation of the Arabs along this coast is sometimes interrupted with.

Patté, a town situated upon the island forming the south side of the bay of Kwyhou, does not appear to have been long under the dominion of the Portuguese, after whose time it became, by turns, independent, under the rule of the Sheiks of Mombaza and that of the Imaums of Muscat. At the present day this town is occupied by a Muscatese garrison. It is of small extent, consisting of a few miserable huts built in the Arab style.

Not far from Patté lies Lamou, at the foot of a range of sandy hills. It contains a population of about six thousand, mostly Arabs, and its governor is appointed by the Imam of Muscat.

Brava and Magadoxo are the only towns of any importance on this part of the coast. The inhabitants of these towns live in a tasteful style, in stone houses built after the European manner, and adorned with fine paintings. Both places have good harbors formed by long reefs, and their commercial operations are carried on with great activity.

From Magadoxo to Cape Gardafûi, the coast does not display the smallest sign of habitation by man, although I observed large herds of cattle and camels grazing along it.

The part of the coast extending from the River Suba to the Red Sea is inhabited by the aboriginal tribe of the Saumalis—a peaceful people of patriarchal manners, and confined altogether to the coast by the warlike tribe of the Gallas, who occupy the interior of the continent.

The women of these Saumalis are magnificent and much sought after, as I have already mentioned when speaking of the slave trade.

Through this country passes the main commercial route from the interior of Africa to southern Arabia. The crews of ships wrecked upon this coast are always kindly cared for by the natives—who dispose of the cargoes, however, according to the laws of salvage. From Berbera and Zeilah, their two principal market towns, caravans trade to the countries of the interior—especially to Hurrur. Thence

their commercial relations extend westward to the kingdom of Choa and the nations inhabiting the regions about the Gourri mountains—the country of the fabulous Macrobian.

Such are the principal points of the eastern coast of Africa annexed to the Imaumate by Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan. English influence, certainly, had much to do with these acquisitions; and it is probable that Muscat, like Aden, will soon become a first-class English station—particularly should the project of the Euphrates railroad, to connect the Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean, be carried out.

Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan has been succeeded by Séïd-Med-jèd, his favorite son and adviser—the elder of the two children borne to him by his French creole sultana. The accession of this prince has been favorably accepted by the chiefs of Zanzibar and Muscat.

At the present time the authority of the Imaums of Muscat extends over more than ten millions of subjects, African and Asiatic—on which account the numerous sheiks composing the Hadramite confederation look upon them as their immediate protectors, which, in fact, they are.

The five small islands of Kunck—or “The Corners”—situated in the Persian Gulf, serve as a retreat for a few Arabs, who occupy themselves in procuring coral. These islands are formed of a sterile, calcareous rock, nearly covered, like the island of Shoâl, with the guano deposited by the innumerable sea-fowl by which it is tenanted. The only plant to be seen there is the wild sorrel, which grows in the fissures of the rock.

The birds there do not display the least sense of danger at the approach of man, not even getting out of the way when nearly trodden upon, but defending themselves with their beaks if touched. They are of the gull kind, and somewhat smaller than a goose.

Opposite the Kunck Islands lies the famous Isle of Ormuz—the *Curmaso* of Marco Polo—the lofty peaks of which appear to be covered with snow, the incrustation being, in

reality, salt, a quantity of which is to be found every where on the island.

The Persian historians tell us that Coth-Eddyn, a prince who reigned at Ormuz, on the coast of Persia, in the fourteenth century, having been obliged to fly from the continent, sought refuge upon this island, then called Djarûn, and there built a city, which he called Ormuz, after his former capital—a name which was afterward extended to the whole island.

Previous to the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, all the treasures of the East were accumulated at Ormuz—the wealth of which is alluded to by Milton, in his “Paradise Lost.”

Abd’el-Ressac, ambassador of Shâh-Rokh, king of Persia, who visited Ormuz in 1442, maintained that it was a town without an equal upon earth; and the oriental writers all concur in stating that the inhabitants of Ormuz of the olden time managed to enjoy upon their barren rock a life of the most luxurious refinement.

From its position Ormuz is naturally strong; and yet, notwithstanding its triple defense of sea and rock and bold warriors, it fell into the hands of Albuquerque—in reference to which M. L. Dubeux states as follows, in his erudite work upon Persia :

“It was toward the close of September of the year 1507, that this great captain made his appearance before Ormuz, with a fleet of seven ships, manned by four hundred and sixty sailors and soldiers.

“This was but a small force with which to attempt the reduction of so populous and strong a place as Ormuz, but the extraordinary man at the head of the expedition was equal to every emergency.

“Seïf-Eddyn, the king of Ormuz, expecting an attack from the Portuguese, caused sixty vessels in the harbor to be fitted out for war, some of them belonging to other nations, but compelled by him to serve.

“Albuquerque, immediately on his arrival, cast anchor boldly in the midst of five of the largest ships of the enemy, among which was one called the *Miri*, manned with a strong crew and well provided with artillery.

“The negotiations respecting which the Portuguese squadron had come to Ormuz appeared to proceed but slowly; and Albuquerque, perceiving that it was the intention of the king to gain time for the arrival of some expected reinforcements, determined to give battle.

“To this resolution the captains of the Portuguese fleet were strongly opposed—whether that they were alarmed at the preparations made by the enemy, or, which is more likely, feared to see their commander give fresh proofs of his superiority.

“Albuquerque, having summoned these captains on board his vessel, consulted them, as he tells us himself, not as to whether an attack would be judicious, but as to how it might best be made. He then addressed them as follows:

“‘As for myself, gentlemen, I am not the man to wind up an affair so important as this with tergiversations and boastful words, but desire, as a chevalier and a brave captain, to execute the orders given to me by the king, our master. Let fortune, then, incline to whichever side it may please her: my hope still is, by the passion of Jesus Christ, in which I put all my trust, to break the heads of these Mussulmans, and to render their chief tributary to the king, our master; otherwise they shall parade my head as a trophy. This is the best and safest resolution that can be taken by us under the present circumstances, and such is our position, in fact, that we can not well do otherwise. Let each of you, then, return on board his vessel and prepare for the fight. When you hear the boom of a gun be ready for action, and follow my lead.’

“The captains of the fleet, although with reluctance, did their duty bravely: the artillery was served with skill, and,

in the beginning of the action, the Portuguese bombardiers sunk two of the enemy's ships.

"The enemy then attempted to push forward a number of small, light row-boats, which, under cover of the smoke, approached the ships of Albuquerque, against which their skilled archers launched forth a hail-storm of arrows. Upon these boats the Portuguese directed their fire, sinking some twenty of them, and throwing the whole flotilla into confusion.

"The crews tried to save themselves by swimming, but Albuquerque sent boats in pursuit and killed a great number of them.

"But the *Miri* still held out, although her crew was reduced to sixty men. At last she was taken by boarding.

"Then Albuquerque caused thirty of the enemy's ships to be set on fire, cutting their cables and letting them drift out of the harbor, lest they might burn the Portuguese ships. Some ships in a dock-yard of one of the suburbs of the town were also burned, together with the suburb itself.

"Soon after sunset, the king of Ormuz, seeing that his fleet was destroyed, and a part of his capital reduced to ashes, sent a cartel boat to sue for peace, upon which Albuquerque recalled his men, who were still fighting on shore, and who, enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, might have yielded to superior numbers—for the combat had lasted ever since morning, and none of the Portuguese had taken any refreshment during the day.

"He then took measures for arranging conditions of peace, and for building the citadel called *Notre-dame de la Victoire*, which was to secure to his country the possession of the island."

Thenceforth Ormuz became the *entrepôt* of the commerce of India, a state of affairs which lasted until April, 1622.

Shâh-Abbas, who reigned at this time, looked with an

envious eye upon this prosperity, of which he hardly understood the source. At last it occurred to him that the conquest of Ormuz would augment at once the glory and the wealth of his kingdom. But he was conscious of the impossibility of carrying out his project without a naval expedition.

However, by means of rich presents and brilliant promises, he prevailed upon the agents of the East India Company to lend themselves to the destruction of this magnificent establishment.

The Portuguese garrison, small in number, at first made a gallant resistance, but at length, overcome by fatigue, pressed by famine, and seeing no hope of succor, they surrendered. The town was abandoned to the Persians, who soon plundered it of all its wealth, and reduced it to ruins, with the exception of Notre-Dame de la Victoire, which still exists, and in which the Imaums of Muscat maintain a garrison.

After the fall of Ormuz, Gomroun and Minao became the *entrepôts* of the commerce which Shâh-Abbas designed to carry on with India. The name of Gomroun was changed by him to Bender-Abbassi, which means the *Port of Abbas*.

These two ports, like Ormuz, have fallen sadly from their splendor of other days. Their exports consist of silk and cotton fabrics, woolen shawls, madder, sulphur, cocoa-nuts, pistachios, and other produce. They import brown and candied sugars, iron, dye-woods, leather, and salt fish. This commerce is altogether in the hands of the Arabs and Hindoos.

In former days, several of the European nations had factories at Bender-Abbassi and at Minao—at which places the Imaums of Muscat now maintain garrisons as well as at Ormuz.

The only water to be had at Bender-Abbassi is that collected in the cisterns, which has a strong flavor of the tank.

Nevertheless, it is not unwholesome, for the inhabitants, who use no other water, are not subject to the Guinea worm, so common along the Persian Gulf. But the climate is far from salubrious, and the intense heat of the summers obliges the inhabitants to take refuge at Kénao—a charming village lying about eleven leagues to the northward, in a country shaded with fruit-trees.

Immediately to the south of Bender-Abbassi begins the Island of Kischm—the *Queixome* of the Portuguese.

This island, which is sometimes called *Djézireh-Diraz*, or Long Island, is the largest one in the Gulf, being about twenty leagues in length. Its population, consisting altogether of Sonnite Arabs, amounts to from four to five thousand, distributed through about a hundred small villages and hamlets. On its eastern side there is a fort, built like that of Notre-Dame de la Victoire at Ormuz by the Portuguese, but now in a sad state of dilapidation. The Imaums of Muscat keep up a garrison here also.

To the north-west of Kischm lies Bassadore, the hottest place in all the Persian Gulf. Here there is an English station, and a few European houses are to be seen. There is also a small caravansary belonging to the Arabs, situated amid the ruins of a great Portuguese city—the reservoirs of which are still entire and supply the inhabitants with water.

These matters disposed of, I will now return to the subject of my travels.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A DRUNKEN HOST.—THE HOUMAÏ-GACHI.—DEPARTURE FROM MUSCAT.

I HAVE already mentioned that my host, Séïd-ben-Calfen, was addicted to strong drink, and of quarrelsome disposition when under its influence—nor was it long before the conduct of that dangerous maniac became so insupportable toward myself personally, that I packed up my baggage one evening when he was worse than usual, left his house, and went to seek lodgings elsewhere.

From that moment his rage against me knew no bounds, and there was no kind of atrocity that he neglected to attribute to me, so as to expose me to the popular indignation. This was an uncomfortable position for me, knowing as I did the manners and customs of the Muscatese—but resignation was the only course, and I resigned myself accordingly.

Fortunately I managed to secure the friendship of Séïd-Thuvéni and Séïd-Saléch, the son and son-in-law of the Imam, which insured respect toward me from the people. I took no pains to conceal my nationality, and many were the questions put to me about European matters, France, Christianity, and the opinions held in strange countries on the subject of Islamism, all of which I answered without reserve.

In the evenings, after the prayer of the Magh'reb, I enjoyed the society of my new friends, our conversation being often extended far into the night.

For the sake of ease and convenience, I had adopted, on my arrival at Muscat, the costume of the inhabitants—a style of clothing altogether too light for me, accustomed as I had been to an equipment better adapted for resisting the scorching rays of the sun. Some days passed over before I experienced any bad effects from this; but, one afternoon, on my return from a long walk in the neighborhood, Selim

remarked the unusual redness of my skin, saying that I had better have continued to wear my former costume. I made light of his remarks, however, notwithstanding the ominous shake of the head with which they were accompanied.

That day I dined with the governor, on presenting myself to whom similar remarks were made respecting my appearance, Séïd-Thuvéni asking me the cause of the strange redness of my skin—which I attributed to the intense heat of the sun. As yet I had experienced nothing worse than a slight twitching sensation, but as the evening advanced I felt so decidedly unwell that I asked permission to retire.

On arriving at my lodgings, and consulting a looking-glass, I found that my face had assumed a violet tint—while, at the same time, I felt symptoms of fever coming upon me, attended with a dull, heavy sensation in the head and much internal pain. Soon afterwards I was seized with delirium and nausea.

Selim, supposing at first that I was poisoned, forced me to swallow a quantity of coffee in which he had infused some pomegranate bark—an execrable beverage, but accounted in these parts as a very efficacious antidote. I raved continually for water, with which he took care not to indulge me, and in the midst of my delirium I fancied I saw Séïd-ben-Calfen rejoicing exceedingly in a corner of the room.

When morning came a rumor went forth that I was sick—then that I was dead. On hearing of my condition Séïd-Thuvéni sent four of his guards to my lodgings, with orders to keep watch over my effects in case of my death. Toward noon, however, the fever abated, but so prostrated was I that, although alive to all the conversation going on around me—good as well as bad—I was utterly unable to give any sign of consciousness.

And now the fanatics of the town, supposing that my last hour was at hand, possessed themselves of me, treating me with verses of the Koran applicable to hopeless cases—notwithstanding all which I still felt the life within me. If I

may so express myself, in fact, I was only superficially dead, for my inward pains prevented me from imagining that I was so internally. Toward evening I rallied sufficiently to desire Selim to bring my medicine-chest, from which I took a copious dose of sulphate of quinine, giving instructions for a similar quantity to be administered to me in the morning, supposing I should be unable to call for it.

Soon after, the fever and delirium again set in, abating somewhat toward three in the morning. Overcome with fatigue I then fell into a slumber, during which pustules broke out all over my body, and congestion of the brain soon followed. From that time I was no longer conscious of my condition.

In thus recalling the remembrance of that terrible fever, I again seem to feel the blood boiling in my veins. The air I breathe is fire—and fire is in my brain. During the day-time I experienced some slight alleviation of suffering—but O the night! the night!

After hours of the intensest suffering, I would start up totally deprived of reason—my eyes flashing, my gestures furious, my words incoherent. During all the crisis I was endowed with marvelous strength and elasticity, so that it was as much as Selim and the four guards could do to prevent me from rushing into the street, in which I beheld all manner of attractive visions. Meadows enameled with flowers, shady groves, wonderful fountains, tables spread with exquisite luxuries, cherished friends in far-off countries, scenes of love and bliss—all these were before me in my ravings.

I have been thus minute in the details of my illness, not that I suppose them of any particular interest to the reader, but because the fearful *houmaï-gachi*, or fever of Muscat, has not hitherto been described.

My recovery may, perhaps, be attributed to an inspiration which led my servants to apply cold water to my burning head, an operation which they managed in a simple but ef-

fective manner. Placing me in an immense jar nearly full of water, they suspended a similar vessel over my head, in such a manner that, on the plug being withdrawn from it, a thread of water about the thickness of a quill streamed down upon me. After this, they rubbed me with hair gloves until heat was restored to the surface—then burying me beneath a load of blankets, to induce perspiration.

During all this time they burned incense in the chamber, to neutralize the effects of the evil eye. This it failed in effecting, but it was of good service in banishing the musquitoes.

Séid-Thuvéni and Séid-Saléch often visited me, and every morning they sent servants to inquire about my health. Further than this, they placed the palace at my disposal, and instructed Selim to apply to them for any thing of which I might have need.

Many residents of the town and neighborhood also called upon me, as well as some English travelers—who, in their suspicious way attributed to me some secret mission of which they would gladly have learned the object. From Séid-ben-Calfen, however, I had no inquiries.

While I was yet sick, Hadji-Soliman made his appearance at Muscat, under circumstances that set aside all doubt as to his intention of taking my life, cost what it might. He was continually prowling round my lodgings, watching the movements of my attendants, in hopes of finding an opportunity to steal in secretly and stab me. But he had once again reckoned without Selim, who, on his return from the palace one evening, saw a shadowy form gliding stealthily toward my door, threw himself upon it, and seized Hadji-Soliman just as he was crossing the threshold. The miscreant attempted to make some explanation, but, on Selim showing fight, he cowered before him notwithstanding his giant stature, and disappeared with a hyena grin—but only to postpone his attempt to a more favorable opportunity.

I was not surprised when Selim related this circumstance

to me, as it only confirmed my suspicions of the assassin, who made a second attempt one morning shortly after—gaining an entrance this time into the very chamber where I lay.

How he came there is a mystery to me—but there he was before me, glaring like a tiger, and gathering himself together for the fatal spring. I called to Selim, who seized the sabre which always hung near my bed, the cold steel of which came in contact with the breast of Hadji-Soliman, as he threw himself upon me, djembie in hand. The fellow was a coward, as I have already mentioned. He recoiled in haste, holding both hands to his chest, which was slightly wounded. But he failed in his attempt to escape, for the four guards, alarmed at the noise of the scuffle, rushed in, bound him and marched him off to prison.

The following night he was shipped off to Zanzibar, as a soldier in the expedition against the Chief of Kwyhou, by whom he was made prisoner in 1847, and blown from the mouth of a cannon. It was a fitting end for an ungrateful villain upon whom I had wasted much kindness, which he returned by accepting a bribe to take my life.

My health was now gradually improving, so that, on the thirty-first day after my attack, I was able to totter about a little on the terraced roof. On the following day, Séïd-Thuvéni and Séïd-Salèch called to see me, and were much gratified on finding me up and eating like an ogre. A week after this I was strong enough to return their visit—which I deferred doing, however, until I had thoroughly undergone the process of changing my skin. This was much advanced by constant use of the bath, as well as by a course of shampooing with various essences.

During my illness, Selim had taken care to be liberal in the distribution of alms, so that the first day I ventured out to visit the palace, I was escorted by a number of the Muscatese—doubtless to the great disgust of Séïd-ben-Calfen, who must have expected a different kind of demon-

stration on their part. On my arrival at the palace, Séïd-Thuvéni and Séïd-Salêch met me in the vestibule, with many congratulations on my recovery.

In the conversation that followed, the question of my departure from Muscat was brought up, and it was decided that I should take my leave six days later—that is to say, on Wednesday, the twentieth of December, 1844. Instead of embarking directly for Persia, I was advised to proceed, in the first instance, to Rostack, the fresh mountain air of which district would do much toward restoring me to perfect health—from thence to Sohar, where I was to embark.

With this view Séïd-Thuvéni undertook to furnish me with camels, the four guards who had watched over me during my illness to travel with me as escort.

When the day of departure came, the three djemêls who were to have charge of the camels came to me at noon to ascertain the precise hour at which they should come for my baggage, as they wished to set out before me. I desired them to pack at once, and to wait for me at a league from the town; for, as they were in the immediate service of the Governor, I ran no risk by making such an arrangement, while, on my part, it showed confidence in my friends thus to separate myself from my baggage. An hour after this they had packed up all and gone on in advance.

Meantime I had visits from some of the chief people of Muscat, who came to take leave of me, according to usage.

At seven o'clock Séïd-Thuvéni and Séïd-Salêch arrived with my escort. Mounting on horseback, I was accompanied by them, and a *cortége* of their chiefs, to the spot where the camels were in waiting, where I exchanged my horse for a dromedary and took leave of my friends. As Séïd-Thuvéni shook hands with me he gave me a sealed letter, saying: "This contains a few lines to my cousin, Séïd-Ahmed. Do not forget that my four guards are responsible for your safety as far as Rostack, after which Séïd-

Ahmed will be answerable for you. Adieu, Hadji ! good luck attend you,—think sometimes of your friends here.”

With these words he set spurs to his horse, and soon disappeared behind a hill, with Séid-Salèh and his suite, while Selim and myself, with our three camels and escort, quietly went on our way in the direction of Rostack.

CHAPTER LXIX.

FROM MUSCAT TO ROSTACK AND SOHAR.—LEOPARD HUNT.—I
EMBARK FOR PERSIA.

It was near morning when we reached the first ridges of Djebel-Akhdar, five leagues from Muscat. Here we found a small fort called Gala, surrounded by Bedouin huts, near which I had my tent pitched, as I felt too weak to proceed any further that day. The route from Muscat to this place is through a well-wooded country.

Next morning, the twenty-second of December, 1844, we resumed our journey at break of day. We had to ascend Djebel-Akhdar by a narrow path, an undertaking of no small difficulty, owing to the exceeding steepness of that rocky range.

When we had followed this path for about a mile, we found ourselves in a region of precipices, where the road in many places was hardly wide enough for the passage of one camel, while on either side of it yawned a fathomless abyss.

And yet the aspect of these wild mountains compensated me somewhat for the sufferings lately endured by me. Great rock-forms, that seemed to touch the sky ; precipices of terrific grandeur ; immense flocks of sheep and goats clambering amid the mountain peaks in search of herbage ; patches of fresh verdure, in pleasing contrast with the savage steril-

ity of surrounding objects—such were the picturesque elements of one of those grand spectacles that lure the mind away from the mere world, and send it soaring aloft into a higher sphere.

About two o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at the plain of Samaeïl, where we disposed ourselves to rest for the remainder of that day and the following night; and at day-break on the following morning we again took our way through these fearful gorges, among which our path lay all the way to Sikki, where we arrived at six o'clock in the evening.

So fatigued was I by this journey that I retired to rest immediately on our arrival, and slept soundly until the following morning, when, on waking up, my eyes were greeted with the charming view of the valley stretching away toward Souâck. For me there was a strange fascination in the scene, so that I could with difficulty prevail upon myself to turn from the contemplation of it; while, at the same time, I felt a singular regret at leaving the mountain region—the impending masses, and picturesque combinations of which had made a strange impression upon me.

In the descent from Sikki to the valley just mentioned our way was one of extreme difficulty, so much so, in fact, that the dromedaries found it no easy matter to keep their feet, although they adapted themselves to the headlong declivities in a very remarkable manner. On arriving at a spot where a descent commenced they used to stop, planting their fore feet close together and advancing them a little. They then made a similar disposition of their hind feet, and, having thus arranged, they would move forward a little on trial, which being satisfactory, they would let themselves slide from top to bottom of the declivity with the speed of the wind.

During this operation the rider had nothing to do but to hold on tight, for the slightest awkward movement would have caused the dromedary to lose its equilibrium and roll

over. The address with which the animals perform this feat is truly remarkable, following the course of the path as if they had known it previously, and were aware of every rut and hollow that might possibly precipitate them to either side.

Yet, accustomed as the dromedaries are to this dangerous maneuver, neither their impassiveness as brute beasts, nor long experience, prevent them from displaying a certain amount of fear on these occasions; for on arriving at the head of one of these slides they always stop, without any signal from the rider, and commence shaking violently, scanning the road at the same time, as far as they can see it, and announcing their sense of danger by snorting loudly—a proceeding rather alarming to the rider not accustomed to these incidents.

Then the djemêls go on in advance, clinging to the rocks and shrubs, and animating the dromedaries by their cries—encouraged by which the animals at last prevail upon themselves to risk the descent, and away they go down the slide. When a dromedary has passed often through this ordeal, and is considered as thoroughly trained to the maneuver, he acquires a certain reputation in the country, and is valued accordingly.

Want of the commonest care in keeping these slides clear much augments their natural difficulty. When a tree happens to fall across the path, the drivers never give themselves the trouble to remove it, simply cutting a portion of it away—it it happens to be a large one—with a few blows of an ax, and then making the dromedaries leap over. To effect this they are obliged to unload the animals, by which much time is lost, and then they leave the obstacle where they found it, to be surmounted in the same manner by the next comers—and there it remains until it rots away.

Once down into the valley we found the traveling delightful, owing to the aromatic plants which abound in it.

The fruit-trees in the gardens here retain their verdure the whole year round. It was now near the end of December, and yet the temperature was so mild that thousands of birds were warbling amid the branches of the orange and citron trees, as in the pleasant days of spring. Clear streams of water came tumbling down in cascades from the hills, perpetuating the verdure of the valley. This vernal scene, succeeding immediately to the awful precipices along which we had been journeying, might well have warmed into life the coldest of imaginations.

What are called villages in this valley consist of a very few cabins grouped together, inhabited by a race of people called Kobails. These people, who are different from the Bedouins, are the true aboriginals of the soil, who, when the country was conquered by the Arabs, fled away into the mountains, and have nearly preserved their independence to the present day.

Each village, like the douars of the Arabs, is under the direction of a sheik. The Kobails elect their sheiks, however, while those of the douars are nominated by the Imaum.

These Kobails are a robust race, with very strongly-marked features; patient also, and capable of enduring much fatigue. They shave the hair from the top of the head, and let it grow long behind. They wear neither shirt nor drawers—a simple jacket of woollen stuff, without sleeves, girt round the waist with a broad leather strap, constituting their only garment.

Their sole amusement is the chase, from which they have learned to handle a gun skillfully, and are excellent marksmen. To show their address, they will fling a matchlock up into the air with all their strength, and catch it in its descent with wonderful dexterity. Like the Hadramites, their matchlocks are their great pride, those who have the means not hesitating to expend sixty or eighty dollars in having a favorite weapon inlaid with silver and ivory.

Next to the chase, their principal occupations are the

culture of the soil and the raising of cattle, and they do a considerable business in dates and peltries. For the sale of cattle and exchange of merchandise, they have their regular market days.

In religion and customs they partly follow the Arabs; but they still preserve their peculiar language, so that the latter are obliged to employ interpreters in trading with them.

Some of these people live in a savage state, like wild beasts, dwelling altogether in the mountain caves.

The Kobails are sufficiently numerous to give occasional trouble to the established authorities. They consent or refuse to pay the tribute imposed upon them according as it suits them. It is but a few years since the Imaum sent an army to reduce them to subjection, but he could not force them to pay the imposts, and was obliged to be content with dispersing them. For, in these mountains, a regular army is of but little use against hillsmen accustomed to climb nimbly among the all but inaccessible rocks, which soon shelter them from the pursuing force.

About noon we arrived at Souâck. An hour later I bade adieu to the valley, and at sunset we reached Rostack.

This city, once the capital of Oman, contains at present but five thousand inhabitants. It is situated upon a high hill called Djebel-Okdat, forty-five leagues west of Muscat, and thirty-eight south of Sohar, going by way of Semêd and Afi. To the south and east of the town, at a distance of about twenty miles, loom up the peaks of Djebel-Akhdar.

The environs of Rostack are well cultivated. Here are to be seen large plantations of apricots, almonds, citrons, pomegranates, plums, palms, apples, pears, peaches, and mulberries. A number of streams descending from the mountains—Fel-Hadj among others—irrigate and fertilize the soil.

Although Rostack is the largest town of Oman, it has no remarkable feature except its extent and the palace of the Imaums. In circumference it is about seven miles. It is inclosed by a massive wall, now partly in ruins from the many sieges stood by it from time to time. This wall is flanked by large, square towers, and defended by a wide ditch. The gates, which are fine arcades of a style analogous to the Gothic, are regularly closed at night.

Besides the palace of the Imaums, the mosques, custom-house, bazaars, and fountains are the only public structures worthy of mention—and in these, indeed, there is nothing that can be called magnificent. Among the mosques there is but one built of cut stone. This mosque is surmounted by a very high minaret, visible from a great distance.

The streets of Rostack—like those of most towns in Asia and Africa—are narrow, crooked and dirty. As at Muscat, deserted and ruinous brick houses are everywhere to be seen. The dwellings of the better class are of stone, two stories high exclusive of the ground-floor, terraced on the roofs and surrounded by gardens. There are three markets held every day, in different quarters of the town, and two in the week for the sale of horses and cattle.

Water is conveyed to the fountains by means of wooden pipes.

On entering the town, the gates were closed behind us. We directed our steps toward an immense caravansary, situated opposite the custom-house, where all caravans arriving from Muscat are accustomed to put up. Soon after we were installed here a slave of the Governor, equipped in military style, made his appearance, with a message from his master, who had been notified of my arrival, politely inviting me to go to the palace, where an apartment was in readiness for me.

I need hardly say that I accepted this offer, which, indeed, amounted to a command. For I had long since discovered the bad policy of running counter to the acts and in-

tentions of oriental grandees—who, in their ignorance and morbid sensitiveness, discern nothing but insult or contempt in any refusal to fall in with their wishes and ideas.

Arrived at the palace, I was received by Séïd-Ahmed, who was in his hall of reception, surrounded by his nobles and chief officers. This young prince, nephew by his mother's side of Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan, was between twenty-five and thirty years of age. His face was one of those striking and characteristic ones which attract and arrest the attention at once; indeed, from the exceeding fairness of his complexion, he might have passed rather for a well-bred European dressed in a splendid Asiatic costume than for an Arab of pure blood.

At my approach he arose, advanced toward me, and, the usual compliments exchanged, placed me on a seat at his right hand, and took the letter given to me for him by his cousin, Séïd-Thuvéni. Having read this, he bade me welcome in the most cordial manner, and we were soon engaged in friendly conversation, as if we had been acquaintances of long standing.

Slaves now entered, and spread before us a large *sanie* on which they served up the evening repast, consisting of a profusion of meats, pillau, creams, *bonbons*, and confectionery of various kinds. After this the conversation became general, until the hour for retiring.

As I have already mentioned, an apartment had been prepared for me in the palace, which is of great extent but in a somewhat dilapidated condition. The walls of this palace, which is situated nearly in the center of the town, enclose a space of about three miles in circumference. It is composed of a number of square pavilions, of stone, irregularly built—some of them being connected by masonry, others isolated. The roofing of some of these structures is of colored tiles, which, at a distance, gives them a rather imposing effect—but the illusion is dispelled on a closer inspection.

One of these pavilions, called *Schingony*—which is a name for Zanzibar—by the late Imaum, on account of his predilection for that island, displays a certain air of grandeur and magnificence. This building, which is at present occupied by the Governor and his harem, offers a striking contrast, in its neatness and elegance, to the bad taste and irregularity of the others. Among its many handsome apartments there is one very large one, the floor of which is laid in blue and white bricks, disposed in a checkered pattern. The ceiling is of painted wood, elaborately carved. When Séid-Séid-Ebné-Sultan resided at Rostack, this building was his favorite retreat.

The other pavilions are occupied by the officers of the court, the guards, and strangers of distinction sojourning at Rostack. They are also used for the accommodation of parties of pleasure, and have nothing in common with the Schingony.

Within the enclosure of the palace, there are many beautiful gardens, abounding in all sorts of fragrant plants, and embellished with numerous fountains, the water from which trickles into basins of graceful design, imparting an agreeable freshness to the air.

The night, here, was so tranquil, that I slept but one sleep until morning dawned. It was yet early when I had a visit from Séid-Ahmed, who came to propose that I should postpone my departure for three days, in order to be present at a leopard hunt which he had been meditating for some time. "Not," as he said, "one of those hunts got up by Europeans in India, who steal upon the animal and shoot him as he sleeps, but one after the fashion of our own hunters, who warn the wild beast of their coming, and meet him in a fair combat of talons against steel."

The party was arranged for the following day, at six o'clock in the morning of which, having first breakfasted, we set out for the hunting-grounds. Our field consisted of fifteen horsemen and about fifty hunters on foot. For some

time, our way lay through alleys of nabacks between fields of maize and wheat, but we soon arrived at a thick covert, where many varieties of the mimosa and turpentine-tree mingled their foliage with that of the majestic sycamore. Having toiled for about an hour through this leafy labyrinth, we came to a small village, round which we made a detour; soon after which, the forest became so dense, that we were obliged to alight from our horses and lead them after us.

Thus we struggled on for another half-hour, until, about ten o'clock, we saw before us an extensive glade, called the Makan-el-Djinns, where, according to popular belief, the djinns are accustomed to abandon themselves to their nocturnal revels. Beyond this glade lay a great tract of thick wood, known, according to my host, to be a favorite resort of leopards. We had seen the tracks of panthers more than once as we came along.

Remounting our horses, we galloped across the plain toward the wood, on nearing which we advanced with more caution. Here our hunt commenced under brilliant auspices, five panthers passing quite near us before we reached the covert: but, unluckily, the ground was so flat that we dare not expose our footmen to the danger of pursuing these terrible animals, which become furious when attacked.

With the leopard the risk is not so great, as the horse is his principal object—a fact which the hunter sometimes makes available, saving himself by abandoning his steed.

When within rifle-shot of the wood we pulled up, and sent some of our footmen forward to examine the borders of a pool to which the leopards come to drink in the mornings, after their nocturnal orgies. On their return they told us that they had found the remains of a sheep, which had probably been devoured the night before—for the tracks of a leopard, in the direction of another piece of wood lying to our left were quite fresh.

If we came across that leopard, our scouts told us, the

conquest would be easy, as the beast was likely to be in a condition of stupor from his gluttonous repast.

Advancing in the direction indicated by them, we found that their information was correct, the fresh tracks bearing evidence that the leopard must lately have been there. Our horses, besides, suddenly showed decided signs of terror: their ears pointing sharply forward, their inflated nostrils, their feverish and uncertain movements—all proclaimed the approach of the enemy.

The footmen now moved forward in close order, holding their matchlocks ready for immediate use, as the hounds, baying ominously, and with tails down, fell back among the hunters for protection.

A dead silence followed, when Séïd-Ahmed whispered to me that, as the leopard had not made his appearance at the baying of the hounds, he was probably gorged, as the hunters had foretold, and would not be the first to attack.

Thus we waited for some time, when at last we saw a huge leopard slowly advancing toward us, his eyes half-shut, as if he had just been aroused from sleep. When within gun-shot, he stopped for a moment to reconnoiter, and then, bellowing frightfully, and lashing his ribs with his tail, put himself in an attitude of defense.

A negro of colossal proportions, who had been selected to begin the attack, now made ready to dash upon the animal with his horse, drawing his two-edged saber and guarding himself with his buckler. But Séïd-Ahmed anticipated him by discharging a bullet at the leopard, which caused the brute to roar and stagger as he advanced.

This was the work of an instant. The leopard now bounded toward us, uttering yells that made our horses plunge until, when within about thirty paces, I saw his glaring eye fastened upon Séïd-Ahmed, who, seeing that he was the object of the animal's rage, laid down his gun and took a lance from one of his followers. But the tall negro now

anticipated him in turn, spurred his horse toward the monster, and was upon him before he could spring.

And now the animals both reared themselves upon their hind feet, the leopard driving his claws deep into the breast of the noble steed. They rolled over together to the ground, not so quickly, however, as to prevent the negro from dealing the fierce beast a tremendous blow with his saber upon the head—while at the moment of his touching the ground he made a second sweep at him, cutting off one of his hind paws, which enabled the rest of the hunters to finish him with their lances. The negro came off without a scratch, but his steed was the victim of the encounter.

Horse and leopard were flayed in an incredibly short time, and their skins stretched on the branches of trees.

We now set forth on our return to Rostack, on approaching which a horseman was sent forward with the news of our victory. The young girls came out in procession to meet us, singing and clapping their hands, and dancing for joy, while the horsemen made their steeds prance as they rode triumphantly into the town.

Next day I employed myself in preparations for my departure. Fresh camel-drivers and guards had received orders to be in readiness to accompany me as far as Sohar. They packed up my baggage at five in the afternoon, and about sunset I took leave of Séïd-Ahmed and shaped my course to the latter town by way of Semêd and Afi, arriving there about the middle of the second day—Saturday, the thirtieth of December, 1844.

Sohar is the most ancient and important town of the Imaumate, after Muscat, from which it is distant about fifty-five leagues. It is situated at the center of the Gulf of Oman, in latitude $24^{\circ} 4'$ north, by longitude $52^{\circ} 37'$ east.

Like Muscat, this town is built against a range of rocky hills—possessing likewise a harbor of six-fathom water, well sheltered from the southeast wind. Its manufactures and

commerce are also similar to those of Muscat. Speaking of it, Edrissi says :

“ In former days, merchants from all parts of the world used to come here, for the importation of the produce of Yémen, and the exportation of merchandise of every kind. This contributed much to the prosperity of the country, which was also wealthy in dates, figs, bananas, pomegranates, quinces, and other fruits, of superior quality.”

The inhabitants of Sohar, who are remarkable for their hospitality, amount to between seven and eight thousand souls—of whom five thousand are Arabs, two thousand negro slaves, one hundred and fifty Ghébirs and Banians, and the remainder made up of Hindoo Mussulmans and Jews.

The town is surrounded by a strong wall, flanked by thirty massive, square towers, and commanded by a formidable citadel, which, like that of Rostack, contains the palace of the governor—Séïd-Hammoud, a nephew of Séïd-Séïd-Ebné-Sultan.

I visited that prince on the evening of my arrival, and was invited by him to leave the caravansary and take up my quarters with him. But I could not avail myself of his offer, because, in the course of the day, I had agreed for my passage and that of Selim on board a Muscatese fishing-boat, about to set sail for Bassorâh, the nacoda of which notified me to be ready to embark by sunset on the morrow, Sunday, the thirty-first of December, 1844.

Nevertheless, I agreed to devote my last day to him, which I did ; and, at the hour above mentioned, I went on board our bark, which immediately after got under way, and we soon came to anchor outside the harbor in three-fathom water, about three miles from Sohar.

As the anchors were let go, I touched the spring of my watch, the repeater of which rang out twelve strokes.

We had just cleared the invisible space that separates one year from another. It was the last moment of the dying

year 1844, waving us farewell, as it sank down into the abyss of eternity, and commending us to its successor, 1845.

Memories now came thick upon me—thoughts of loved ones far away, who little guessed that I was at that moment wishing them a “happy new year,” from a fishing-boat in the Gulf of Oman. I was shivering with cold, and wet to the skin by a heavy rain storm, which had surprised us before our departure—a shower such as people can form no idea of in France.

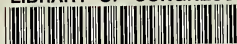
The year that had just passed away was one by which a great influence had been exercised upon my life. I commenced it in a comfortable home—I closed it on board a crazy Arab boat, anchored in the midst of rocks, to the melancholy music of the surging sea and of the south wind, which whistled in the rigging and brought groans from the straining grappnels, upon which our safety depended.

During that year I had roamed, since my departure from Abû-Arisch, through the country of Théama—had reveled in the picturesque mountain scenery of Sana, of Mareb, and of Hadramaut—had tracked my way across the pellucid depths of the Indian Ocean, and now I left Oman far behind me—Oman of the sterile peaks and luxuriant valleys.

And this tempestuous night was to me a presage—foretelling the stormy times reserved for me in the mysterious future.

THE END.

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